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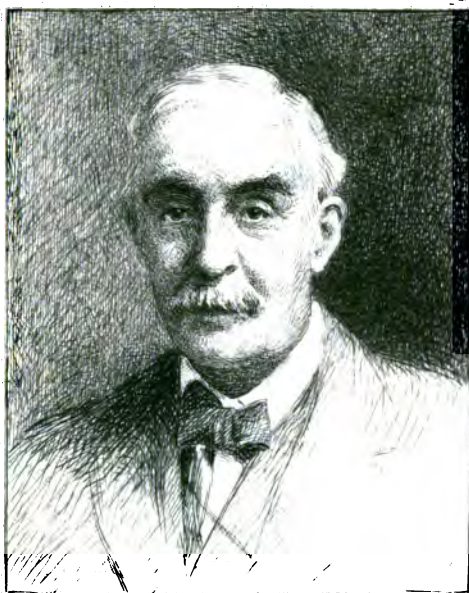
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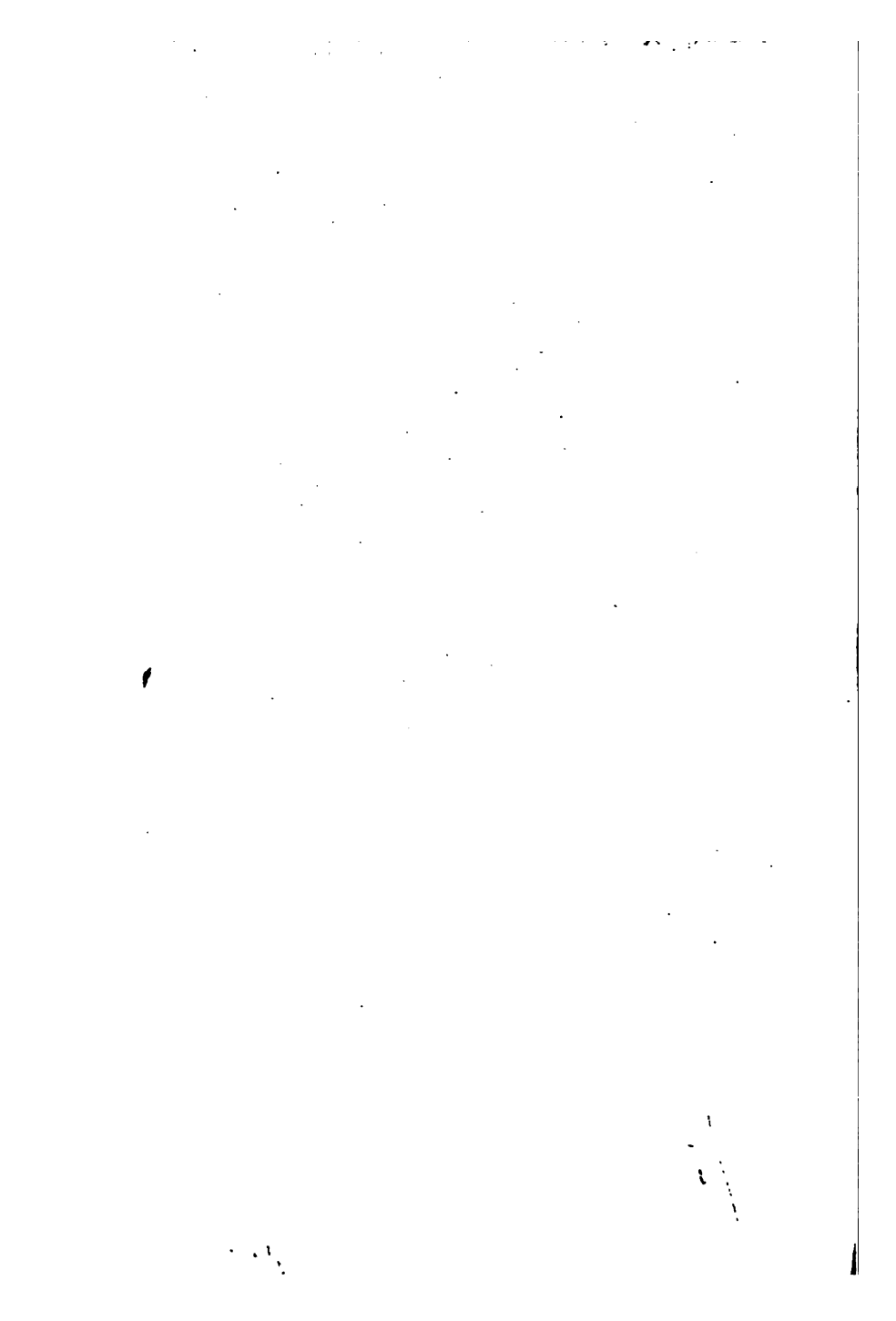


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THOUGHTS ON RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

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THOUGHTS ON RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

BY

THE HON. ALBERT S. ^{*Sturford*} G. Canning,
G. Canning

AUTHOR OF

"MACAULAY, ESSAYIST AND HISTORIAN,"

"LITERARY INFLUENCE IN BRITISH HISTORY,"

"REVOLTED IRELAND, 1798-1803," ETC.

44

London:

EDEN, REMINGTON & CO.,
15 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1891.



12-10-38

1-14-39 J.A.

"Let no one venture on the open sea of religious discussion without having the compass of history steadily before his eyes."

—MAX MÜLLER'S "Natural Religion," *Lecture 10.*

THOUGHTS ON RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE advice of Professor Max Müller I choose for a motto, and hope to follow in this volume. The historical compass he recommends, aided by the most learned and modern geographical research,¹ presents maps of the known world from 450 B.C. till towards the end of this century. The earliest information thus furnished, alike by geography and history, shows only a

¹ Keith Johnston's "Geography."

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part of southern Europe, northern Africa, and western Asia.

Throughout this limited portion of the world, Greek paganism, Judaism, and the Persian sun worship seem the first religions known to mankind, or at least the earliest ever distinctly ascertained or examined with the aid of literature.¹ The ancient faiths of northern Europe, including Britain and Ireland, vanished without leaving scarcely any literary trace. Successive centuries gradually revealed more and more about adjacent countries, and with their discovery have displayed to posterity many different religions of great antiquity, none of which, except perhaps Buddhism, presents the same historical interest or aspires to the same moral influ-

¹ "Of Odin there exists no history ; no document of it ; no guess about it worth repeating."—Carlyle's essay on the "Scandinavian Mythology."

ence as the three above named, and their successors, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Yet it is certain that thousands of years before these last religions were known and contemporary with, and even before all that can be known of any religion, there existed throughout both the old world and the new millions of men who lived and died, geographically as well as historically, excluded from the knowledge of any religious faith or system.¹ In fact, the intellectual history of mankind, comprising, of course, all religious knowledge or conception, was evidently confined for an immense period of time to a very small minority of men, and was preceded

¹ "There is reason to believe that in their origin the religious theogonies and heroic tales of every nation which has left a record of itself—of Greece and Rome, of India and Persia and Egypt, of Germany and Ireland—are but poetical accounts of the first impressions produced upon mankind by the phenomena of day and night, morning and evening, winter and summer."—Froude's "Short Studies." Vol. II.

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throughout unknown ages of human existence by utter ignorance of all religion.¹ Thus, while Pagans and Jews were despising or hating each other, chiefly owing to their different ideas of their Creator, they were alike quite ignorant about that vast majority of their fellow-men who, by the will of the same Creator, as is generally believed, were fated to live and die throughout many centuries in complete ignorance of Him.

If we could now realise the religious state of the ancient world as it undoubtedly existed, we should see many of these unknown countries — America, Australasia, southern Africa, eastern Asia, and northern

¹ "It is impossible to maintain that belief in God is innate or instinctive in man. On the other hand, a belief in all-providing spiritual agencies seems to be universal, and apparently follows from a considerable advance in his faculties of imagination, curiosity, and wonder. . . . The idea of a universal and beneficent Creator does not seem to arise in the mind of man until he has been elevated by long-continued culture."—Darwin's "*Descent of Man*." Ch. xxi.

Europe — peopled for many centuries by millions of different worshippers, and all unknown to either Greek polytheists, Jewish deists, or Parsee worshippers of the sun, and of the fire as its emblem, who for a long period comprised all, or almost all, the known religions of the world.¹

The religious and national enmities revealed in the Bible between the Jews and neighbouring heathens seem the first religious antagonism historically recorded. These accounts, transmitted exclusively by Jews, for the sole instruction of their posterity, say little about the religions of their

¹ "Zoroaster or Zerdusht was the founder of this religion in Persia, acknowledged to be one of the great fundamental religions of the world. Although but few of the followers of this religion now remain, yet the very fact of their existence to the present time as a small but highly respectable sect, both in Persia and India, give very great interest to the question of what is the faith established by Zoroaster nearly three thousand years ago." — "The Story of Persia," by Benjamin, pp. 87-176.

foes, except that they were heathenish and idolatrous. No record furnished by the hostile or exterminated races has been bequeathed, and historical students are left with the Jewish accounts alone, describing the Jews as a chosen, preferred, and favoured people, and all other nations more or less offensive or uninteresting to the Creator of all mankind. Had the Jews, after the death of Jesus, regained political power or independence, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they would have described Him, His followers, and His doctrines, with the same contemptuous animosity which distinguishes their notice of almost every other religion and nation. But the political supremacy and more humanitarian views of the Roman Pagans in every way promoted Christianity. "The Roman world became the Christian world,"¹ and ever since this

¹ Renan's "Hibbert Lecture."

transformation a knowledge of the world's different religions, from the most ancient times, has been, though very gradually, communicated, free from religious bigotry, to educated, enlightened Europeans.

In examining and reflecting on the religious history of nations, that of the Jews holds the foremost place from Christian and Mohammedan standpoints, as well as from their own. Theirs is the most ancient faith existing. It is the foundation alike of Christianity and Mohammedanism, and has survived the efforts of both its offshoots to extinguish it during centuries of persecution.¹ All that can be said by Christian theologians about the triumphant vitality

¹ "The world has by this time found it impossible to destroy the Jews."—Lord Beaconsfield's "Life of Bentinck." Ch. xxiv. (published in 1852.) See also Milman's "History of Christianity," Hallam's "Middle Ages," Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," and Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," about the persecution endured by the Jews from Christians and Mohammedans.

of their various denominations can surely be said with even greater force about the vitality of Judaism. No religion has survived such an amazing amount of adversity; yet after centuries of oppression and legalised ill-usage, it is now free, preserved, and steadily maintained in all the most civilised Christian and Mohammedan countries in the world. It seems now, indeed, to usually accompany and aid civilisation, prosperity, and peaceful influence, wherever they prevail.

Lord Beaconsfield¹ predicts that the position of the Jews with reference to European nations will hereafter form one of the most remarkable chapters in a philosophical history of man. Probably he did not consider a history of the Jews since Christianity had been properly written, despite their importance, social position, the unequalled interest of their religious history, and the ample

¹ "Life of Bentinck." Ch. xxiv.

means afforded by this enlightened century to accomplish such a work in a satisfactory, if not exhaustive manner. Yet a history of the Jews by an unconverted member of their race would scarcely have gratified Lord Beaconsfield; while their history in connection with other nations could hardly have been written by a Christian without its materially differing from his views, which combine intense Jewish national pride with regret at that nation retaining their ancient faith, instead of becoming Christian. On the other hand, Jewish history when told by sceptical writers is likely to be equally displeasing to both Christian and Jewish readers.¹

Probably no historians, except unconverted Jews, in writing a philosophical history of

¹ See Mr Buckle's contemptuous allusion to the Jews, comparing them with other nations—"History of Civilisation," Vol. II.—where he blames Bishop Bossuet for thinking too highly of "this obstinate and ignorant race" in his "Universal History."

man, could place that race in the extraordinary position claimed for them by their illustrious descendant in the sight of Christian Europe. He, in fact, deplores that very adherence to their ancient deism which, to a religious mind not warped or embittered by political interest or prejudice, would surely seem their greatest historical triumph. In their religious history, indeed, the chief glory of the Jews appears.

From their earliest oppressions by Babylonians and Egyptians to their last persecutions by Christians and Mohammedans, which even now occasionally revive in Russia, Germany, and Armenia, their conscientious firmness is the noblest refutation possible of the charge of absorbing worldly avarice, which their foes in all ages have declared to be their sole and ruling passion.¹ Their

¹ "The pursuit to which oppression for ages restricted the Jew has exposed him peculiarly to be the prey of

religious history is, in every sense, far more glorious than their philosophic one: yet it is the latter to which Lord Beaconsfield alluded and apparently wished to see.

A philosophical history of man, however, could scarcely describe the Jews to their advantage compared with other nations. Contrasted with their ignorant, yet wise and intelligent Pagan contemporaries, the Jews were always strangely indifferent about the welfare of mankind.¹ No nation was likely to be improved by their conquest of or intercourse with it.² Unlike the Greeks, imparting their poetry and philosophy to

this vice. In the popular idea, the Jew is the embodiment of covetousness."—Hosmer's "Story of the Jews." Ch. i.

¹ "Nor does the world see elsewhere, perhaps, such capacity for malevolence. What scorn and scowl has the Hebrew had for the rest of the earth."—Hosmer's "Story of the Jews." Ch. i.

² Mr. Buckle, who, like Gibbon, much prefers the comparatively philanthropic Pagans to the exclusive Jews, uses

all who admired them, and unlike the more practical Romans, who laid a civilising, improving touch on every country they ruled, the Jews, considering their great moral and religious advantages, were apparently one of the most exclusive, if not selfish, nations in the world.¹ Even their God was for themselves alone.² Though they believed all

rather exaggerated language about the latter: "A plundering, vagabond tribe, wandering on the face of the earth, raising their hand against every man, and every man raising his hand against them."—"History of Civilisation." Vol. II.

¹ "Those who were eager for learning resorted to Greece from all quarters. At Alexandria, Grecian philosophers and rhetoricians were no less numerous, so that thither also there was a general resort of scholars as to a literary market. The Romans introduced literature and philosophy into all the countries which they brought under their subjection for the purpose of softening their savage tempers and promoting their civilisation."—Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History." Ch. i.

² "The Jew demanded that every proselyte should be enrolled as a member of his race. . . . Exclusiveness, which was the primary principle of the existing Judaism, limiting the Divine favour to a certain race, would scarcely believe that foreign branches could be engrafted on the parent stock."—Milman's "History of Christianity." Vol. I.

mankind the work of one Creator, they yet encouraged, fostered, and preserved the flattering yet practically unjust idea that because they belonged to a peculiar race, in one particular locality, they were therefore preferred and specially favoured by the same Being who had brought all men into sentient, responsible existence. This cherished and perhaps unconsciously unjust belief the Jews "grappled to their souls with hooks of steel" from their earliest records.

If practically as well as philosophically examined, such a belief seems little better than personal pride extended from individuals to a nation, and selfishly restricted to that limit. This idea, however, though so deep-rooted among the Jews, never aroused the anger of their Roman rulers, nor, indeed, during their ancient independence did it incur the indignant, destructive hatred of

other nations as much perhaps as might have been expected. The reason evidently was that, despite their extraordinary national pride, the Jews, compared with other nations, were unaggressive, if not inoffensive.¹ They had little wish to obtain either religious converts or political subjects: they were, in fact, too proud and self-rooted a people to much covet the admiration or desire the gratitude or prosperity of other races. Among nations they were not unlike Shakespeare's picture of Richard III., in the English royal family, they had no brethren, they were like no brethren; and philanthropic love might be resident in other nations, but not in them; they were for themselves alone. Even their long-desired Messiah was expected to only

¹ "Judaism, however unsocial and exclusive, was still an unaggressive national faith."—Lecky's "European Morals." Vol. I.

benefit the Jews. He was to promote and extend their power and prosperity in every way, but to be of no service to other nations. It is evident indeed that, if calmly considered, the Jewish Messiah was a somewhat gross conception.¹ He was merely destined to practically benefit his own nation, and promote their worldly interests at the expense of others, but on an infinitely grander scale than that of any previous Jewish hero or conqueror. Not only Christians, therefore, but every other people, had even temporal reasons

¹ "The Messiah, in compliance with the gross apprehensions of the Jews, had been more frequently represented under the character of a king and a conqueror than under that of a prophet."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Vol. II. ch. v.

"National pride and patriotism appropriated not merely the lofty privilege of being the ancestors of the Great Deliverer, *but all the advantages* and glory which were to attend His coming."—Milman's "History of the Jews." Vol. I. bk. ix.

to rejoice at the appearance of the just, peaceful, humane Jesus, instead of a war-like national champion, devoting himself to the promotion of the worldly interests of the Jews alone at the expense of other nations.¹

Yet their extraordinary spiritual and national pride seems never to have been remonstrated with or reasoned about by either of their intellectual contemporaries, the Greeks and Romans. The former in peaceful intercourse, the latter in political power, alike left Jewish pride alone, and felt little curiosity or irritation about it. No nation, or indeed any individual, seems to have practically noticed it till the Christian Founder appeared among the

¹ "The stranger would be trodden down, Israel would be consoled, and the Messianic kingdom, with its centre at Jerusalem, would suddenly burst upon the world."—Morrison's "Jews under the Romans." Ch. xvi.

Jews, and during Roman authority over their land. Regardless of personal safety or popular indignation, He assailed it with a keen force, and, as it were, an undermining power, never before devoted to it. Not all the haughty scorn of the Roman soldiery offended or irritated the Jews so deeply as the reproaches of Jesus. This intellectually religious contest between Jesus alone against His surrounding nation, while both were under Roman rule, is surely one of the most instructive moral studies presented in religious history.¹ It was a most important and in some respects a most awful mental encounter. Though the argument was often sustained in the

¹ "The invincible obstacle to the designs of Jesus came in particular from orthodox Judaism, represented by the Pharisees. Jesus drifted away more and more from the ancient law. Now, the Pharisees were the backbone of Judaism."—Renan's "Life of Christ." Ch. xx.

Jewish capital, Jesus was personally safe, at least for some time, under Roman authority.¹ Had an unconverted Jewish king been reigning absolutely, it is likely Jesus would have been stoned to death on the first complaint of Jewish priests against Him. But the Roman governor was peculiarly hostile to Jews and Judaism.² He had opposed their feelings from his first arrival in Judea, but evidently liked practical improvements, and among a progressive people might have been a

¹ "The mass of the population of Judea was contented and comparatively happy under the rule of the Roman Procurator. The Romans were regarded as the protectors of the people against their domestic tyrants."—Merivale's "Romans under the Empire." Vol. V. ch. xlv.

² "Pontius Pilate, like his master Tiberius Cæsar, was of a fierce and irreconcilable spirit, and of a cruel and covetous disposition. He began his government very much to the displeasure and disturbance of the Jews, bringing the Emperor's images into Jerusalem by night, in contempt of their Law, which strictly forbids such practices."—Echard's "Ecclesiastical History." Ch. i.

more popular governor.¹ Such a man was quite indifferent to the contest between what he would probably have called the old and new Jewish religious opinions.² If any of the Roman soldiers heard it, they never apparently noticed it, though like every other nation their sympathies would surely have been with Jesus. But He seems never to have desired to appeal to or interest them in any way. His apparent indifference towards Pagans and Paganism, considering the intellectual character of the Romans, their previous history, the absurdity of their re-

¹ "Pilate gave the Jews a new occasion of sedition by a sacrilegious attempt upon some of the sacred money in the Temple, which he employed in bringing of water by conduits to the city—which work though useful and beneficial, yet the inhabitants looked upon it as so great a profanation that when Pilate came to Jerusalem they gathered about him in vast multitudes, openly murmuring at his proceedings."—Echard's "Ecclesiastical History."

² "In the height of their power, when their own faith and their own right hands were equally potent, the Romans felt

ligion, which many of them distrusted, as well as their political position in Judea, and indeed throughout the known world, is perplexing to contemplate. Yet it was clearly consistent with His avowed and mysterious restriction of His personal mission not only to the Jews alone but to the "lost sheep" among them. Accordingly, His sentiments were those of the civilisation of the present age, opposed by a haughty, exclusive, perhaps conscientious priesthood, who, while unconvinced, could only consider Him a heretical deserter from their faith, availing Himself of the protection afforded by Roman rule to reproach them in their own capital and among their own people. Such seems to have been the idea of the Jews respecting the contest of Jesus with their chief

no scruple in allowing every race and every man among their subjects to worship God after his own fashion."—Merivale's "Romans under the Empire." Bk. iv.

priests.¹ It has always been described or alluded to in Christian or Mohammedan versions—never by the Jews, whose political history always precluded their writing about Jesus at all. It is, indeed, to be regretted that no Jewish account was ever transmitted, for it would not be fair for Christians and Mohammedans to conclude, as in the Middle Ages they apparently did, that all Jews who opposed Jesus were wicked, and morally unscrupulous men. Amongst them were probably some at least who believed they were as right to reject Jesus as others to believe in Him.

Their subsequent enforced hereditary

¹ "Jesus always addressed himself to refined moral sentiment. He was only a disputant when he argued against the Pharisees, his opponents forcing him, as almost always happens, to adopt their tone. His exquisite irony, his stinging remarks, always went to the heart. . . . A hatred which death alone could assuage was the consequence of these struggles."—Renan's "Life of Christ." Ch. xx.

silence has been for centuries their mute, yet eloquent, reply to historical descriptions chiefly furnished by Christians, and believed to a great extent by Mohammedans, of the keen disputes between Jesus and the Jewish priests. In this argument none of the disciples apparently took part. They probably listened in admiring, perhaps some in terrified and astonished silence, to the complete denial of all Jewish preference in the Creator's sight proclaimed, for the first time in history, by a supposed Jew. Although immense importance was attached to this denial by all believers, the Jews never recorded it. Jesus seemed arguing, if not pleading, for every other nation with the chief priests of His own, who viewed His conduct more as the desertion of a fellow - countryman, or the heresy of a co - religionist, than that of an

estimable opponent. In fact, the whole style and tenor of His language and philosophy were eminently fitted to convert, convince, and gratify the Pagan world, but were, and still remain, utterly unsuited to the Jewish.¹ There would seem one remarkable instance, and one only, in

¹ Dr Newman says ("Grammar of Assent") that Jesus "left the world without apparently doing much for the object of His coming; but when He was gone His disciples were found wonderfully to have succeeded." This passage seems to admit the comparative failure of the personal mission among the "lost sheep" of Israel, and the subsequent success of Christianity throughout the Pagan Empire.

"On all sides, and to an extent unparalleled in history, we find men who were no longer satisfied with their old local religious belief, passionately and restlessly seeking for a new faith. In the midst of this movement Christianity gained its ascendancy." — Lecky's "European Morals." Vol. I.

"Christianity was compelled to leave its birthplace and find its proper home in the Western World, amongst the inhabitants and progressive civilisation of Greece and Rome." — Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Moham-medanism."

which the Roman nature came into personal contact with Jesus. For Pontius Pilate was evidently so alarmed at the Jewish threat of complaint against him to his jealous master, Tiberius Cæsar, that he yielded to his fears or interest in opposition to his private feelings.¹

But, according to St Matthew, a centurion, evidently a Roman, addressed Jesus in a very different spirit from what He had previously encountered during a life spent exclusively in Syria. This official, in a frank, trustful manner, described his own position over subordinates, and ascribed to Jesus a similar authority over the powers of evil.²

¹ Milman's "History of Christianity."

² "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus

The impression he made was apparently one of mingled satisfaction and surprise, Jesus declaring that He had found greater faith in this centurion than in all the Jews He had previously known. Yet among them His disciples were inevitably included, but probably their faith, partly at least caused by intimacy with Jesus, proved less of that implicit and natural reverence displayed by a comparative stranger like the centurion. This event might seem to historical students as rather foreshadowing the political history of Christianity, which, distrusted and almost suppressed among the Jews, acquired complete, permanent ascendancy over all Greek and Roman minds, rendering Rome itself the religious as well as the political capital

heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

of the civilised world. The intellectual substitution of Christianity, in place of the previous Greek and Roman Paganism, is beautifully described by one of the most attractive and accomplished of British historians, whose brilliant language evidently expresses no more than historic truth.¹ The amazing transference of Christianity from its lowly and despised obscurity in the south of Syria to the spiritual sovereignty of the vast Roman empire has been described

¹ "It [the Catholic version of Christianity] is of all religions the most poetical. To the Phidian Jupiter it can oppose the Moses of Michael Angelo, and to the voluptuous beauty of the Queen of Cyprus the serene and pensive loveliness of the Virgin Mother. The legends of its saints and martyrs may vie in ingenuity and interest with the mythological fables of Greece. Its ceremonies and processions were the delight of the vulgar; the huge fabric of its secular power with which it was connected attracted the admiration of the statesman. . . . While like the ancient religions it received incalculable support from policy and ceremony, it never wholly became, like those religions, a merely political and ceremonial institution."—Macaulay's *Criticism on the Italian Writers*, "Miscellaneous Works." Vol. I.

by historians and theologians throughout Europe for centuries.

But the previous extension of Buddhism and the subsequent triumph of Mohammedanism—the former throughout Asia, the latter throughout parts of Asia, Africa and Europe—have only been recently examined and recorded by Christian writers with impartiality. The firm, unrivalled, secure position of established Christianity evidently enables writers of that faith to describe others with an attentive fairness, and often with an admiration which in the Middle Ages would have been generally disapproved, if not utterly condemned. It is, therefore, cheering to the philanthropist to perceive more justice done to the memories and doctrines of Zoroaster, Buddha and Mohammed, by Christian writers than was ever thought right or safe to award them

at any previous period in Christian history.¹

¹ "The religion of Christ seems to me to become more and more exalted the more we know and the more we appreciate the treasures hidden in the despised religions of the world. . . . Its defenders should encourage rather than depreciate the study of comparative theology. . . . The [Christian] conquest is gained, and we have time to reflect calmly on what is past and what is still to come. Surely we need not be afraid of Baal or Jupiter. Our dangers and our difficulties are now of a very different kind. An honest and independent study of the religions of the world will teach us the same lesson that it taught Saint Augustine, that there is no religion that does not contain some grains of truth. It will enable us to see in the history of the ancient religions, more clearly than anywhere else, the Divine education of the human race."—Max Müller's "Science of Religion," Lec. i. and iv.

CHAPTER II.

THE latter part of this century, besides witnessing increasing intercourse between Europe and the new worlds of America and Australasia, has immensely extended European knowledge of both Asia and Africa. Not only are former histories and travels republished, but new works, adding fresh information to knowledge accumulated in the past, are constantly issuing, especially from the London press. Thus all known religions, ancient, mediæval and modern, combining the accounts of the earliest writers of antiquity with the personal discoveries and elucidations of living men, are now examined by Europeans with

a knowledge, fairness, and freedom from bigotry unknown in the world's previous history. In ancient, mediæval, and even comparatively modern history, religious inquiry and discussion roused the most violent, uncharitable, and unscrupulous passions. No subject of mental thought has, throughout all ages, excited so much anger and injustice as that of religious discussion or examination. In inspiring men with implacable, self-deluding hatred, religious differences have had more effect even than political contests, according to impartial history.

In the peaceful rivalries or emulations of art, science, literature, or philosophy, though jealousy and enmity are occasionally aroused by all, there has always been a comparative absence of really dangerous hostility. In political wars, contests, and arguments, though all, indeed, have been disgraced by wanton cruelty, oppression, and injustice,

there has usually been some recognition of noble or redeeming qualities amongst opponents. Such recognition has often failed, or been too late to save men from political persecution; but it has generally rescued or preserved their memories from uncontradicted slander or permanent calumny. Not so often in religious dissensions. In these the supposed favour or wrath of the common Creator has been confidently assumed by fallible, passionate, ignorant men, with a firmness of mental conviction seldom if ever found upon any other subject except religious belief.

Yet this question, above all others, is so far beyond human knowledge that the confidence with which men have pronounced their Creator's supposed blessings or curses upon each other is one of the most astonishing facts presented even by Christian history. We find that before, during, and

since the Middle Ages, many of the leading men among Christian denominations have openly pronounced the Creator's eternal condemnation of those differing from them in mere details of the same doctrine.¹ Contending religions, represented by eager theologians, preachers, prophets, or devout kings, have from the earliest ages firmly decided about the supposed future conduct of the Creator towards mankind. They have pronounced His will, His orders, His warnings, and declarations of future wrath or favour, with a confidence of statesmen proclaiming the will and pleasure of sovereigns they personally knew.

¹ "The reformer Zuinglius described with his mind's eye when every upright and holy man who has ever lived will be present with his God."—Lord Russell's "Western Christianity." The author states that both the Romish Bishop Bossuet and the reformer Luther agreed in thinking that this opinion would cause the future condemnation of Zuinglius. See also Hallam's "Middle Ages," Guizot's "Civilisation," and Lecky's "Rationalism," about the in-

In this century, especially during the last fifty years, the enormous increase of international communication and travelling, besides the immense spread of general education, enable Europeans to examine religious history with a knowledge, fairness, and interest before unknown.¹ Unlike former times, the personal safety, credit, and worldly interests of its students are no longer, at least in many countries, endangered by any result at which their free mental decision may

tolerance of the first reformers towards each other, as well as towards Roman Catholics, who fully reciprocated the same sentiment.

¹ "The comparative study of religion is beginning to teach, at all events the most thoughtful of mankind, that no religion is exclusively good, none exclusively bad. . . . Christians may and must arise from an impartial study of the religions of the world with their belief vastly deepened that their Sacred Book stands, on the whole, on a far higher level than other Sacred Books, and they must also acknowledge it is possible and natural for sincere Mohammedans and Buddhists to arrive at the same conclusions concerning their own faiths." — Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism."

arrive. Thus, the most ancient of all known religions are freely compared, collated, and sometimes connected with the most recent opinions about religious truth. In these studies Europeans take the lead, yet in all their religious examinations or inquiries their minds are fixed upon Asia.¹

In this quarter of the world all the religions arose which have left permanent impressions or acquired lasting influence over the minds of existing men. The extinct religions of Greece and of northern and western Europe—the former described and bequeathed in the most splendid poetry and intellectual argument ever known, the latter almost lost, except in vague tradition—have alike practically vanished, apparently never

¹ "All Sacred Books come to us from the East. Not one of them has been conceived, composed, or written in Europe. . . . There are five countries which have been the birth-place of Sacred Books :—1, India ; 2, Persia ; 3, China ; 4, Palestine ; 5, Arabia."—Max Müller's "Natural Religion."

to revive in mankind's credulity.¹ The same may be said of the extinct religions of America, which, unadorned by literature and unexplained by history, have disappeared with the ignorant races who alone believed them. But the attractive Paganism of Greece and Rome, though no longer retaining the belief probably of a single human mind, still engages the interest, and to some extent commands the admiration, of all men of taste and culture, while no other extinct religion seems to retain much interest for either poets, historians, philosophers, or

¹ "Think of the Teutonic, the Celtic, and the Slavonic nations! Where are we to gain an insight into what we may call their real religious convictions, previous to the comparatively recent period when their ancient temples were levelled to the ground, to make room for new cathedrals; and their sacred oaks were felled to be changed into crosses. When we ask for the religious worship of the Teutonic, Celtic, or Slavonic tribes, the very names of the deities in whom they believed are forgotten and lost forever."—Max Müller's "Science of Religion," pp. 63, 64.

theologians.¹ The attraction which this vanished faith still retains, and perhaps always will retain even for those who utterly disbelieve it, is a remarkable fact in religious history. Some most eminent statesmen, as well as historians of this century, have taken the most lively, admiring interest in it.² The typical natures of its half-human gods and goddesses possess a charm for all educated Europeans which no other imaginary deities ever possessed in the same degree. The interest, if not respect, due to antiquity is in them combined with

¹ "It was a surprising spectacle to behold the Teutonic nations melting gradually into the general mass of Christian worshippers. . . . The Grecian polytheist was often driven into Christianity by the void in his religion; the Roman was commanded by its high moral tone and vigour of character. But each had to abandon temples, rites, diversions, literature, which had the strongest hold on his habits.

. . . How much more suited were some parts of the Teutonic character to harmonise at first with Christianity!" —Milman's "*Latin Christianity*." Vol. I. ch. ii.

² The late Lord Derby, Mr Gladstone, Lord Macaulay, the first Lord Lytton, etc.

qualities eminently suited to attract and delight the refined and intellectual minds of all ages.

The surviving religions which now chiefly claim the obedience, attract the notice, and command the attention of thoughtful minds are those of Buddha, throughout Central Asia; of Zoroaster, now chiefly in India; and Confucius in China; in addition to Judaism and its offshoots, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Yet the last three alone influence the most civilised countries and cities in the world.¹ Among the first named, Buddhism seems

¹ "If we ask the founders of so-called individual religions whether their doctrine is a new one, whether they preach a new god, we almost always receive a negative answer. Confucius emphatically asserts he was a transmitter, not a maker; Buddha delights in representing himself as a mere link in a long chain of enlightened teachers; Christ declares that He came to fulfil, not to destroy, the law of the prophets; and even Mohammed insisted on tracing back his faith to Abraham."—Max Müller's "Science of Religion." Lec. ii.

the most important. It appears never to have suffered the persecutions endured by the yet earlier faith of Zoroaster; never to have been made generally known by the wanderings of its votaries, like Judaism; nor implanted, like Christianity, by energetic preachers; nor enforced, like Mohammedanism, by warlike triumph.¹ It has never left the land where it first arose, thus, like Mohammedanism, contradicting the proverb that a prophet has no honour in his own country. In the native lands of Buddha and Mohammed their religious systems have ever since their time been devoutly followed, yet, except in India and China, they do not seem to have come much in contact.

Buddhism, though recently explained and described by English translations of local

¹ "It is a misfortune to human nature when religion is given by a conqueror."—Montesquieu's "Spirit of Laws." Ch. vi.

poems, as well as sacred books, has remained politically stationary for many years, but has lately been more elucidated than ever by the examination and learning of accomplished Europeans.¹ It has apparently been described and discussed without much of that excitement, or even interest among its votaries, which Christians and Mohammedans usually display when their doctrines attract the attention of unbelievers. The mild,

¹ "A generation ago, little or nothing was known of this great faith of Asia, which has, nevertheless, existed during twenty-four centuries. . . . The spiritual dominions of Buddha extend at the present time from Nepaul to Ceylon, over the whole Eastern Peninsula to China, Japan, Thibet, Central Asia, and Siberia. India itself might fairly be included in this magnificent Empire of Belief; for though the profession of Buddhism has for the most part passed away from the land of its birth, the mark of Gautama's [Buddha] sublime teaching is stamped ineffaceably upon modern Brahmanism; and the most characteristic habits and convictions of the Hindoos are clearly due to the benign influence of Buddha's precepts. More than a third of mankind, therefore, owe their moral and religious ideas to this illustrious prince."—Sir Edwin Arnold's preface to "*The Light of Asia*" (published in 1889).

calm, somewhat passive nature traditionally assigned to Buddha himself would seem to actuate many of his followers, who stolidly adhere to their faith without feeling, or at least expressing, either dislike to or much curiosity about others. Meantime the religion of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer, is still that of the majority in India.¹

The comparatively few Parsee followers of Zoroaster are now mostly found under British rule in the west of India, though a few still remain in Persia, their ancestral country.² They seem to make very few if

¹ See Max Müller's "Natural Religion."

² "The special characteristic of the Persian religion is dualism. In the beginning, it is said in the Zend-Avesta, there were twins, the Spirits of Good and Evil. Ormuzd, the Creator of the World, is the Spirit of Good, but is opposed by the destructive power of the Evil Spirit Ahriman almost as by an equal. All created things are regarded as designed for the struggle against evil. Man is or ought to be the ally of Ormuzd, and thus every virtue becomes for him a matter of duty"—Ranke's "Universal History." Ch. iv.

any converts, and though rather resembling the Jews in their political history and in peaceful habits, show little of the persevering energy of that wonderful race. In India, Mohammedans, while making some converts from Brahminism and Buddhism, make few if any among Parsees, owing partly to their historical enmity.¹

Most students of religious history may, perhaps, be allowed to treat Buddhism, Parseeism, and the system of Confucius, with slight notice compared to what is due to Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, as the former religions exercise little influence over learned, civilised minds, and seem declining, or at least not progressing in either intellectual or political importance; but Judaism, surviving many centuries of unequalled persecution, is now found in almost every civilised country. Its wonder-

¹ See Lyall's "*Asiatic Studies*." Ch. xvi.

ful ancient history, its terrible adversities during the Middle Ages, and its practical revival during this century, when its votaries, even its ideas, seem acquiring more and more influence over Christian rulers, literature, and legislation, claim for it an attention, especially among Christians, which cannot be claimed to an equal extent by Parsees and Buddhists, though it may by Mohammedans.

CHAPTER III.

THE religious and political histories of Christianity alike describe a faith which, arising among the Jews, made little progress among them, while among Greek and Roman Pagans it spread with an enthusiasm, a completeness, and a permanence unequalled in religious history. Its first opponents were the politically weak but doctrinally firm Judaism, and the politically strong but doctrinally weak and wavering Paganism. It may be said to have in a great measure failed with the former, but to have extinguished and replaced the latter as thoroughly as the warmest Christian advocates could desire. The faith firmly resisted by the Jews proved thoroughly suited to what

St Augustine called the "praiseworthy Roman nature."¹ Its conflict with Judaism has been termed a civil war; that with Paganism the invasion and conquest of a new territory.² Yet these comparisons, unless carefully considered, might not cause right conclusions; for Judaism and Christianity, though at first co-existing in the same land and among the same race, had not those objects in common which a civil war must have in its very nature for the latter aims at the rule and government of the same country without reference to any other. It triumphs or fails in the same land, among the same people, and is essentially limited and local in its designs, successes, and losses. The strife between Judaism and Christianity was between two religions, which, though claiming the same origin, desired, advocated, and

¹ Extracts from the Fathers.

² Milman's "History of Christianity."

contended for very different and, indeed, incompatible objects.

The design of Christianity was essentially aggressive, revolutionary, and general, respecting no distinctions of race, but, on the contrary, denouncing the least idea of national preference. The objects of Judaism were essentially defensive. It strove to maintain and preserve, without the least change, its ancient doctrines, ideas, and philosophy, without desiring to spread them among any other nation. Judaism was for the Hebrew race alone.¹

In opposing Christianity, therefore, it resisted a faith in some respects as hostile to its historical belief and transmitted ideas

¹ See Milman's "History of Christianity."

"The Jews never thought of spreading their religion, and when they had to admit strangers to some of the privileges of their theocracy, they looked upon them not as souls that had been gained, but as Proselytes—which means men who have come to them as aliens, not to be trusted, as their saying was, until the twenty-fourth generation."—Max Müller's "Essays on Religion." Vol. II.

as a new religion introduced by a foreign nation, for it utterly denied the firm and cherished Jewish belief in national preference by mankind's Creator. It boldly, eagerly, and frankly declared that all nations obeying its doctrines were alike pleasing to Him.

This declaration was, naturally, more acceptable to every other nation than to the Jews.¹ It was indeed especially odious, if not humiliating, to the latter, when announced by a member of their own race. Had it been proclaimed by a member of any other, they would have heard it probably with the same incredulity, but comparative indifference. In Jewish estimation, therefore, the Christian Founder was a

¹ "When the promise of eternal happiness was proposed to mankind, on condition of adopting the faith and of observing the precepts of the Gospel, it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion, of every rank, and of every province in the Roman empire."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Vol. II. ch. xv.

deserter from His national duty in being a deluded or deluding religious teacher, and as born of their race, His execution was eagerly desired by the most influential and zealous of the nation.¹

Although Christian triumph over Roman Paganism was certainly to some extent the conquest of a new territory, yet it was over one well prepared, ready, and suited for its reception.²

Throughout the vast empire of the Romans, comprising nearly all the civilised countries of the old world, their fanciful Paganism, historically venerated but philo-

¹ "The influence of Jesus at this period was fast becoming a power among the masses, and both the Rabbis and the priestly aristocracy, whose system He was menacing, were anxious, on religious grounds, to see Him put to death." —Morrison's "Jews under the Romans." Ch. v.

² "For a thousand years, the Mediterranean had been the great highway where all civilisation and all ideas had met and mingled. The Romans, in clearing it of pirates, had made it an unequalled means of communication. It was in some sort the railway of those times. . . . The Roman world became the Christian world."—Renan's "Hibbert Lecture."

sophically doubted by some professed believers, yielded completely to Christianity. Although it was at first cruelly opposed by the Roman government, yet it was chiefly persecuted by unpopular tyrants, whose enmity was morally creditable if not advantageous to a new religion. Its worst foes, the Emperors Nero and Domitian, were almost enemies to the human race, and detested by their Pagan subjects, whose faith they nominally upheld.¹ The opposition of the Emperors Julian and Marcus Aurelius did not arise till Christianity had greatly spread through the Roman Empire. The enmity of such truly great men was indeed grievous to learned scholars and philanthropists, but it was too late to much alarm either Christian politicians or even earnest theologians.

Europe, subsequently divided among Chris-

¹ See Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Also Renan's "Anti-Christ," and Echard's "Ecclesiastical History."

tian empires, kingdoms and republics, during many religious disputes, often showed an intolerance of feeling more like the Jews than the Romans. Its religious ideas were, indeed, derived chiefly from the former, while its political principles, legislative acts, and general policy were more founded on the model of the latter.¹ Nothing in Christianity offended or wounded Pagan feelings as it had the Jewish. The Christians sympathised with the inquiring ignorance of the Pagans, assuring them that the unknown God, whom some of their wisest men had often vaguely acknowledged, was the same Creator whom Jesus declared had sent Him to mankind. Yet none of the more intelligent Pagans,

¹ "Rome occupied, in the view of the western races, the same place which Greece claimed in the eyes of the Romans. She was beheld with the same awe and respect, and acknowledged as a mistress in civilisation more potent than in arms. The western nations were content never to look beyond Rome for their ideas."—Merivale's "Romans under the Empire." Vol. IV. ch. xxxix.

before Christianity, ever examined Jewish religious history. Between them and the Jews, during Greek and Roman intercourse and power, there was always an extraordinary and, for the human race, unfortunate estrangement.¹ It would seem that, during all Jewish social, political, or commercial intercourse with Greeks and Romans, the Jews never tried to recommend their faith to them, far less to attempt conversions.²

¹ "They [the Romans] made war against the Jews; they made laws against the Christians; but they never opened the Books of Moses. . . . The fact seems to be that the Greeks admired only themselves, and that the Romans admired only themselves and the Greeks."—Macaulay's "Essay on History."

² "Rome, in her triumphant career of conquest, had broken down the barriers of nationality, and the free intercourse of races which ensued had given an accelerated impulse to the growing idea that all men ought to meet together in a fraternal spirit on the wide platform of their common manhood. The Jew repudiated these ideas of human brotherhood. He prided himself upon being a member of a chosen people. He lived within the charmed circle of Divine Grace; the heathen were outside of it. At a former period of their history, this exclusive spirit was justifiable on the part of the Jews, but under the Roman

The more thoughtful of Pagan minds, who naturally distrusted their fanciful mythology, while speculating ignorantly about an unknown God, never sought or expected to find Him revealed in the books of their Jewish contemporaries. Century after century passed—the Jews firmly maintaining their exclusive deism, and disregarding every other religion, while the Pagans evidently thought little about the God of the Jews—till the Christians, issuing from the latter's country, announced Him according to the version given by Jesus, and inextricably involved with His personal mission and new doctrines. With this version, of course, unconverted Jews could not agree, nor could they hear it with the indifference which they showed and really felt

Empire the necessity for this attitude of exclusiveness had departed, and it became, as the educated heathen truly observed, a hateful and anti-human feature in the life of the race."—Morrison's "Jews under the Romans." Ch. xvii.

towards all other religions, as it specially condemned their national pride, many of their habits, and also their whole conduct towards Jesus Himself.¹ They therefore exerted all their influence with their Roman rulers to persecute and suppress this new religion, the first which, since the creation of the world, had doctrinally tried to supersede their own.² But their malevolent influence with the Romans, which was, perhaps, as great in Italy as in Judea, was not of very long duration.³ To the amazement of the civilised

¹ "In the years which had rolled away since the first Christian preaching, the Jews alone had persecuted the work of Jesus; the Romans had protected the Christians against the Jews; now the Romans became persecutors in their turn."—Renan's "Anti-Christ." Ch. ii.

² "They no longer possessed the administration of criminal justice, nor did they find it easy to infuse into the calm breast of a Roman magistrate the rancour of their own zeal and prejudices."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Vol. II. ch. xvi.

³ "The Jews formed a large and influential colony in Rome. They retained undiminished, in the midst of a Pagan population, their exclusive habits."—Lecky's "European Morals." Vol. I.

world of those days, the ruling Paganism gradually became ruling Christianity, and in great measure by means of peaceful conversion.

The Jews, never regaining independence, thus changed their political masters, passing in subjection from the Pagan to the Christian yoke. Yet before this change they had become a completely scattered race; no longer having a country of their own, they inhabited no land in particular. They settled in most European and in some Asiatic and African countries, firmly retaining, under different religions and political governments, and despite the most terrible persecutions, their ancient, unchanged faith.¹ The change from Pagan to Christian rule,

¹ "The attempt to extirpate the Jews has been made under the most favourable auspices, and on the largest scale. The most considerable means that men could command have been pertinaciously applied to this object, and for the longest period of time. Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, Scandinavian crusaders, Gothic

for a long period, was decidedly unfortunate for the Jews. Instead of being ruled by supercilious, cool, indifferent Pagans, who had no wish to force their religion upon anyone, the Jews became ruled and subjected by eager votaries of a new faith, who, while believing in the old Testament like themselves, detested them all the more for their conduct towards the Founder of the new. Thus for centuries the Jews and Christians viewed each other with a peculiar hatred which neither could feel for the votaries of any other religion in the same degree. The Christians, declaring that the new Testament was indissolubly connected with the old, tried by every means of legal ingenuity, zealous eloquence, and cruel persecution, to force their religion upon the

princes, and holy inquisitors, have alike devoted their energies to the fulfilment of this common purpose."—Lord Beaconsfield's "Life of Bentinck." Ch. xxiv.

adherents of the old.¹ The Jews, with equal though silent energy, rejected the Christian addition with a determination which, considering their political condition, finally became one of the most heroic defensive struggles in the religious history of mankind.² But no one in their behalf or interests dared to record it. The virtues and sufferings of Christ and His apostles, through subsequent centuries, were proclaimed in the most brilliant literature, and illustrated by the highest artistic genius. Eloquent, devout orators, in glowing words, have transmitted them to succeeding generations of Christian believers, while artistic power, in lovely pictures, noble statues, and beautiful, entranc-

¹ Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History." Part I.

² "In Judaism the whole nation was the Church. The Jew entered into the religious privileges of his life, not by any conscious act of his own but by being born of Jewish parents; he retained his true life by remaining in contact with his nation."—"Lux Mundi," p. 368.

ing music, have, especially in Italy, glorified Jesus and His followers by every resource of human talent and genius.¹ But the virtues or sufferings of the silent, subjected, politically helpless Jews were for many centuries known to few but themselves. For many years, probably, a true account of their wrongs would have been alike unsafe and useless to publish among the votaries of the triumphant religion, which their ancestry had vainly tried to extinguish by the execution of its Founder. Yet to their own faith, in the days of its persecution, they were more faithful than were some of their remote ancestry during its political ascendancy or freedom. There was no more worshipping of golden images, except what sarcasm might allege about their avarice. No more deser-

¹ "Christianity had her great era of art, comprehending architecture, painting, sculpture, and music—Christian in its fullest sense, as devoted entirely to Christian uses, expressive of Christian sentiments."—Milman's "Latin Christianity."

tions of their Creator by transference of His due worship to idols.¹ Their persecutions by triumphant Christians, and by subsequently triumphant Mohammedans, involuntarily aided in preserving Jewish deism more firmly than ever. Equally rejecting the additions of Jesus and Mohammed to their Bible, which yet the followers of both acknowledged the foundation of their two religions, the Jews, under Pagans, Christians and Mohammedans, have continued to cherish and preserve till this day their ancient faith, utterly unmoved by the triumph or the decline of any other religion.² The addition of Christian doctrine

¹ "As the protection of heaven was deservedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionable degree of vigour and purity."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" Ch. xv. See also Buckle's "Civilisation" on this subject.

² "The bitterest persecution, so far from exterminating them, has not eradicated a single characteristic. Language, literature, customs, traditions, traits of character—these, too, have all survived. The Jew of New York, Chicago, St Louis, is in body and soul the Jew of London, of St Petersburg, of Constantinople, of the fenced cities of Judah in the

to the Jewish faith was in some respects independant of the personality of Jesus. It acknowledged, praised and encouraged virtue in all men, irrespective of locality or nation. This recognition was evidently the desire and philosophy, if it may be so termed, of Christ himself, but it was by no means shared in by many subsequent Christian teachers. By some of them the moral value of virtuous conduct in non-Christians was both theoretically and practically denied altogether. A correct belief in Christ's personal mission and nature was by them raised to an exclusive and essential importance in the sight of God, for which the conduct and history of Jesus gave no sanction whatever, although His few recorded words were subjected to various and even opposite interpretations.

days of David. There is no other case of a nation dispersed in all parts of the world and yet remaining a nation."—Hosmer's "Story of the Jews." Ch. i.

CHAPTER IV.

THE political establishment of Christianity over the Roman empire, by the triumph of the first Christian Emperor Constantine over his Pagan rival Maxentius, proved essentially permanent.¹ A few great minds, among whom the Emperors Julian and Marcus Aurelius were pre-eminent, subsequently desired the restoration of Paganism, but were unable to effect it. That singular

¹ "We have already seen how loose and how uncertain were the religious sentiments of [Greek and Roman] polytheists. . . . When Christianity appeared in the world, even these faint and imperfect impressions had lost most of their original power. Human reason, which by its unassisted strength is incapable of perceiving the mysteries of faith, had already obtained an easy triumph over the folly of Paganism."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Vol. II. ch. xv.

religion had completely lost its hold on the mass of the people, among whom Christianity became not only deeply-rooted but popular.¹ Its successes amongst the Teutonic and Celtic nations appear to have been still more easy and bloodless,² and once achieved, never to have been disturbed by any Pagan revival.³ Thus the beautiful and poetic mythology of Greece and Rome, with the more mysterious heathenism of Europe,

¹ "The victories of Christianity over Paganism excited all the passions of a stormy democracy in the quiet and listless population of an overgrown empire. The tones of an eloquence which had been silent for ages resounded from the pulpit of Gregory; a spirit which had been extinguished on the plain of Philippi revived in Athanasius and Ambrose." —Macaulay's "Essay on History."

² Gibbon's "Decline and Fall."

³ "The Gothic tribes descended on the ancient world. The fabric of civilised society was dissolved in the mighty crisis. . . . In the Western, Latin Roman clergy, in the missionaries who went forth to Gaul, to Britain, and to Germany, the barbarians found their first masters. In the work of controlling and resisting the fierce soldiers of the Teutonic tribes lay the main work, the real foundation of the Papacy." —Dean Stanley's "Eastern Church."

yielded as completely to Christianity as the latter's most ardent advocates could desire.¹

In Asia, the Persian followers of Zoroaster successfully opposed it.² Their remarkable faith, rather like the Jewish, despite its emblematical character, was yet fated to be politically extinguished, and nearly, though never quite, eradicated by the triumph of Mohammedanism.³

¹ "The rapid extension of the Roman conquests, for centuries after the birth of Christ, was a providential means for facilitating the conversion of many nations. England, Gaul and Germany were thus gradually civilised and enlightened. There can be no reasonable doubt as to the complete national conversion of Ireland by St Patrick, though for several centuries some Pagans remained."—Cusack's *Manual of Irish History*."

² "Christian principles do not appear to have made any deep impression on the minds of the Persians, whose religious system, by the labours of a well-disciplined order of priests, had been constructed with much more art and solidity than the uncertain mythology of Greece and Rome."—Gibbon's *"Decline and Fall."* Vol. II. ch. xv.

³ "The benevolent and malignant deities or spirits of ancient Persia, Ormusd and Ahriman, each possessed the powers of creation, but each disposed, by his invariable nature,

During the five or six centuries elapsing between the rise of Christianity and that of Mohammedanism, the former's history was that of gradual but steady triumph over nearly all other religions. The whole of Europe, part of northern Africa, and part of western Asia, became Christian. The Old and New Testaments were declared completely connected by the Christians, despite the silent but resolute opposition of the subjected Jewish race to that assertion or belief.

The energetic new religion, resting its origin on immemorial antiquity, ardently preached by those who had seen the Finisher

to exercise them with different designs. . . . The elements, and more particularly fire, light, and the sun, whom they call Mithra, were the objects of their religious reverence. . . . The moral duties were, in their turn, required of the disciple of Zoroaster, who wished to escape the persecution of Ahriman, and to live with Ormusd in a blissful eternity." —Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Vol. I. ch. viii.

of the Faith, and subsequently by those who knew men who had seen Him, combined the reverence due to antiquity with the charm, importance, and enthusiasm of novelty. Mohammedanism, also founding itself on Judaism, while eagerly extinguishing the idolatrous worship of Arabia, which in its human sacrifices apparently resembled the heathenism denounced in David's psalms,¹ came like its Christian predecessor into fierce conflict with the Jews. The latter, throughout Arabia, viewed this new faith with dread and hostility as well as distrust.² Indeed, Jewish enmity to both religions was practically a far deeper feeling than its previous contemptuous distrust of any other faith. Yet these three religions, avowedly founded on the same Book, instead of making it

¹ See Gibbon's description, "Decline and Fall." Vol. V.

² See Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism."

a bond or medium of reconciliation, alike perverted it into a cause of unscrupulous and, for centuries, almost implacable hatred. This strange spectacle in the religious history of mankind is proved throughout the political records, legal enactments, and theological teaching of the Middle Ages.¹ The Jews, owing to the rapid triumph of Mohammedanism and the previous establishment of Christianity, nearly all fell under the political rule of these two religions. Like Christianity, Mohammedanism first established itself by martial victory, but its triumph was over the degraded and degrading Arabian idolatry; while that of Christianity was over the comparatively harmless, attractive Paganism of Greece and Rome. Mohammed himself, with a boldness and firmness of conviction in his alleged inspiration never

¹See Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," Hallam's "Middle Ages," and Milman's "History of Christianity."

surpassed in religious history, denounced his ancestral faith with abhorrence.¹

Unlike the respectful allusions of Jesus to the Jewish old Testament, and His mild addition of the Gospel, while enjoining the worship of the same Creator, Mohammed's Koran utterly contradicted and finally extinguished the ancient religion of his country. Whether he actually despaired of the salvation of its former believers, including his own ancestry, seems uncertain. But he evidently welcomed, admired, and in many ways obeyed both the Jewish old Testa-

¹ "Mohammed averred that he was foreshown, both in the Law and in the Gospel, though these prophecies had been obscured or falsified by the jealousy of the dominant party among the Jews and Christians. Mohammed himself remains, and must remain, an historic problem."—Milman's "*Latin Christianity*." Vol. II. ch. i.

Sir W. Muir, Messrs Carlyle and Bosworth Smith, however, do not find Mohammed so difficult to understand as Milman apparently does, and have all explained his character according to their different views.

ment and its Christian supplement, while denouncing all other religions he knew of with the most complete censure.¹ In many respects Mohammed resembled the idea of the Jews of their Messiah; and had he belonged to their race he would probably have been better received than the peaceful Jesus. But as an Arabian he was hopelessly unacceptable to the Jews. The extinct worship of Greece and Rome he apparently never mentioned, and probably knew little if anything about. He devoted his energies chiefly against the old religions of Arabia and Persia, probably never came in contact with Buddhism, and

¹ "The captive Jews enjoyed the secret revenge of imposing their own belief on the nations whose recent creeds they deride."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Vol. V. Yet history proves that the Jews had little reason for "enjoyment" from the cause Gibbon alleges, as they suffered more persecution from Christians and Mohammedans than from the votaries of any other religion.

was for some time favourably disposed towards Jews as well as Christians.¹ In most respects Mohammed's character was specially suited to captivate and charm the Arabs. He possessed nearly all the physical and mental tastes, habits, and qualities likely to please, attract, and permanently influence the Arabian youth. His hatred of the ancient Persian and Arabian faiths was, indeed, implacable and, in regard to the former, unreasonable; but with both Jews and Christians he proclaimed an affinity of doctrine which in more enlightened times, and amongst more civilised contemporaries, might have caused, at least, comparative

¹ "The Jews repelled the overtures of the Prophet. They scoffed at his pretensions; they provoked his terrible vengeance. . . . Lord of Mecca, Mohammed stands supreme and alone. The Arabian mind and heart are his; the old idolatry is sunk at once before the fear of his arms and the sublimity of his new creed. He can disdain the alliance of those whom before he might stoop to conciliate."—Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. II.

charity and goodwill among the three religions. "Say to the Christians," he said to his followers, "that their God is the same as ours,"¹ and urged them to "dispute gently" with both Jews and Christians as they had received the Scriptures.²

Yet despite his words, as well as the fact of the three religions being "branches from the same parent stock," history is forced to relate the most implacable hatred between them. The Jews, from the first, seem to have opposed Mohammedanism with much the same apprehensive distrust with which a few centuries before their ancestry had opposed Christianity. Evidently, they

¹ Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism."

² "It would be impossible to understand the teaching of Mohammed without a knowledge of the Old and New Testaments. Though the Koran bears the clear impress of Mohammed's strong individuality, its vital doctrines can easily be traced back to Jewish or Christian sources."—Max Müller's "Natural Religion." Lec. xx.

wished the Roman paganism and the Arabian idolatry to extinguish both these newer religions, which were alike founded on their own. This is a singular fact to contemplate in modern civilised life, but it seems historically proved. If the Jews could have decided the religious fate of the world, they would, in all likelihood, have increased the political influence of their faith under the rule of a brave national Messiah, and have left the paganisms of Europe, Asia, and Africa unchanged. Though Mohammed at first tried to conciliate or win over the Jews, he abandoned the attempt, and became their most determined foe and persecutor.¹ For this change in Mohammed's

¹ "The choice of Jerusalem for the first kebla of prayer discovers the early propensity of Mohammed in favour of the Jews; and happy would it have been for their temporal interest had they recognised in the Arabian prophet the hope of Israel and the promised Messiah. Their obstinacy

conduct to them, Jewish or Mohammedan advocates, even among Christian writers, may give different reasons, but evidently the Jews, like the Christians, saw nothing in the Mohammedan belief in a great part of their own faith to reconcile them. It is a common saying in social philosophy, founded, doubtless, on social experience, that quarrels between near relations are often more serious and implacable than those between utter strangers. Likewise, it seems that the mutual animosities between Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, especially during their first collisions, equalled, if they did not exceed, those of any

converted his friendship into implacable hatred, with which he pursued that unfortunate people to the last moments of his life."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" Vol. V.—It seems a remarkable fact in religious history that the conscientious firmness with which helpless Jews successively rejected triumphant Christianity and Mohammedanism was often considered mere "obstinacy" even by free-thinking writers.

other religions previously known ; for though Mohammedan conquest replaced the paganism of Arabia and the north of Africa, while nearly extinguishing Parseeism in Persia, yet these countries were, on the whole, by no means averse to a faith which in many respects peculiarly suited them.¹ Thus the three great existing religions for many years opposed each other with more bitterness than any of them had ever endured from any other faith. Their common foundation of the old Testament never reconciled them to each other ; while the Gospel and the Koran were to the Jews alike irreconcilable with their ancient faith, to which they

¹ "Mohammedanism spread with a rapidity, and it acquired a hold over the minds of its votaries which it is probable no other religion has altogether equalled. . . . It discovered the great, fatal secret of uniting indissolubly the passion of the soldier with the passion of the devotee . . . It created a blended enthusiasm that soon overpowered the divided counsels and the voluptuous governments of the East."—Lecky's "European Morals." Vol. II.

both claimed to belong.¹ Yet, unlike the votaries of these religions, the Jews seem never to have discussed any theoretical or doctrinal questions with either Christians, Pagans, or Mohammedans. For their hereditary silence their political subjection was to some extent responsible, though not entirely; as even in their days of political independence they cared as little to convert the Pagans of Greece and Rome as to subsequently convert Christians or Mohammedans. All they desired was to be left undisturbed in their own religion, an indulgence which, though contemptuously granted by the Roman Pagans, was afterwards denied them

¹ "The Koran gradually assumed the language of insulting superiority or undisguised aversion. The Jews, from the earliest ages, had been the murderers of the Prophets. The murder of the Prophet Jesus is among their darkest crimes. What wonder that they now turn a deaf ear to the Prophet Mohammed? They were enemies, therefore, to all true religions, and to be pursued with unmitigated enmity." —Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. II.

by Christians and Mohammedans, whose proselytising enthusiasm generally attributed Jewish sincerity to ignorant obstinacy, rather than to the sustaining power of sincere conviction. The subsequent disputes, however, not only between Christians and Mohammedans, but between opposing divisions of those denominations, gradually diverted persecution from the Jews, who, usually politically obedient, seldom aroused either the suspicions of rulers or the hopes of revolutionists, while to disputing theologians, they presented the same passive, peaceful, and indiscriminate obduracy. The quarrels among Mohammedans, however, were trifling indeed compared to those between Christians, yet neither occurred during the lives of Jesus or Mohammed.¹

¹ "Mohammedanism furnishes a storehouse of illustration to Christian ecclesiastical history such as can be found in none of the heathen religions of the world. . . . In each

Their personal influence was either utterly opposed by resolute unbelievers or joyfully obeyed with complete, uniform submission by revering disciples. The Mohammedan disputes resulted chiefly in the division between the Persians, who acknowledged Áli, their Prophet's son-in-law, as his successor, and the vast majority of Mohammedans in Arabia, Africa, Asia Minor, Tartary, etc., who preferred the rival successor, Omar. But the Christian Church was split into many divisions from the first dispute between the Greek and Roman Churches, and the previous Arian controversy, till the Reformation in western Europe, which was directed against the Roman

case there is a marked descent from the vigour and purity of the first followers to the weakness and discord of those who succeed. In each case the Church is broken up into divisions, large and small, and is developed into systems of which its first framers knew nothing."—Dean Stanley's "Eastern Church." Ch. viii.

Catholic version of Christianity, and only arose in countries under its authority.¹ No city, however, could for many centuries rival Rome in Christian influence and estimation.

Rome possessed sole power over Judea many years before and after Christ. There was far more communication between it and Jerusalem than between the latter and Byzantium, as proved by Scripture history. These historical facts would probably render Rome for many years after Christ the chief depository of Christian thought and information.² The "period" Stanley men-

¹ According to Dean Stanley, the Greek or Eastern Church is the one from which the other Asiatic Christian Churches "have broken off." "Constantinople is the sacred city to which the eyes of the Greek race, and of the Eastern Church, are turned at this day. . . . The subsequent rise of the Papal city, on the ruins of the old Pagan metropolis, must not blind us to the fact that there was a period in which the Eastern and not the Western Rome was the true centre of Christianity."—"Eastern Church." Lec. i.

² "The Roman Empire was gradually formed by bringing, first Italy, and then the whole of the Mediterranean lands

tions was evidently after the first Christian emperor invested Byzantium, not only with his own name, but by his residence there, with a theological importance it never had before. But this importance was partly political. Christian doctrine, information, and principle, before this period, were conveyed to Rome by the first apostles, and subsequently maintained by persecuted believers long before Byzantium, under the name of Constantinople, became a Christian city.¹

under the dominion of the one Roman city. In the end, all the civilised world of those times became Roman. In Syria and Egypt, where there was an old, native civilisation, neither Greek nor Roman influences took real root."—Freeman's "Historical Geography." Ch. iii.

¹ "It was to the Jewish colony in Rome that the Gospel first found admission, working its way by a process of slow diffusion, first to other foreign settlers in Rome, then to Greek-speaking Romans, whether Jewish proselytes or friends of Judaism; last of all, to the Latin-speaking population."—Salmon's "Introduction to the New Testament." Part I. p. xliii.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN triumphant Christianity was established on the ruins of Roman Paganism, the most important dispute within its spiritual dominion was between the Eastern and Western Churches, the former claiming Constantinople and the latter Rome as the Christian capital. Rome, in almost all respects, had vast advantages over her opponent.¹ Learning, art, comparative civilisation, political influence, and a vast majority of followers, were on her side, while the Greek Church

¹ "The New Rome asserted her Roman dignity against the East. . . . Rome was the sole Patriarchate of the West—the head and centre of Latin Christianity. Rome stood alone almost without rival or reclamation."—Milman's "*Latin Christianity*." Vol. II. ch. v.

remained comparatively stationary, and made fewer proselytes.¹

The Latin or Western version of Christianity, when divided and sub-divided among Protestant sects, viewed and was viewed by them alike with the same steady condemnation previously expressed by it against all non-Christians, and afterwards expressed by both Latin and Greek Churches against each other.

In the many subsequent divisions of the Protestant faith, most of them took the same hopeless view about the fate of those differing from them even in mere details of the same doctrine.² While established Catholicism and established Protestantism alike proclaimed the Creator's wrath against

¹ Stanley's "Eastern Church."

² See Hallam's "Middle Ages," Guizot's "Civilisation," Lecky's "Rationalism," and Sir G. C. Lewis's "Influence of Authority."

each other with equal confidence, the Protestant sub-divisions, at least when they first arose, usually followed the same example. The enmity with which Anglicans, Presbyterians and Independents, viewed each other is sufficiently proved even in the comparatively narrow sphere of British theological history. In its records fellow Christians and fellow countrymen openly abhorred each other's versions of the same faith as intensely as if they had no common purpose or origin. All the great truths believed in common, as enjoined by Christian morality, went practically for nothing in their theological estimate or political treatment of each other. The favour or wrath of their Creator, and consequently their own estimation of each other, depended entirely on their points of religious difference. Thus, in lands where Paganism and Judaism no longer ruled or persecuted Christianity, and centuries after

its political triumph, its opposing sections viewed and treated each other much as their remote ancestry were viewed and treated by avowed enemies to their common faith.¹ The amazing confidence

¹ "Scott in historical fiction admirably exposes the bigotry of fellow Christians in Britain. In the 'Monastery' he describes a Catholic and Presbyterian clergyman, formerly intimate friends, when during Scottish civil war the latter fell into the former's power. 'The judge and the accused met face to face, and in that of both was enthroned the noble confidence of rectitude. The monk was about, at the utmost risk to himself and his community, to exercise what he conceived to be his duty. The preacher, actuated by a not more ardent zeal, was prompt to submit to execution for God's sake, and to seal his mission with his blood. The Sub-Prior looked at him from under his cowl, which he had drawn partly over his face, as if he wished to shade his own emotions. They were those of a huntsman within point-blank shot of a noble stag, who is yet too much struck with his majesty of front and of antler to take aim at him. The heart of the Sub-Prior relented, and he doubted if he ought to purchase, by a rigorous discharge of what he deemed his duty, the remorse he might afterwards feel for the death of one so nobly independent in thought and character.' Ch. xxxi. In 'Woodstock,' Scott again describes, during the reign of the Commonwealth in England, two former friends, an Anglican and a Presbyterian clergyman, as thoroughly

with which the idea of exclusive sectarian salvation animated most if not all Christian divisions was proved not only in zealous, vehement sermons and discussions, but by the more practical and dangerous evidence of political legislation. A comparison

alienated by their religious differences. 'They sat down together the best of friends, and for half-an-hour talked with mutual delight over old college stories. By degrees they got on the politics of the day, and a hue and cry against the Independents and other sectarists being started, they followed like brethren in full hollo, and it was hard to guess which was most forward. Unhappily, in the course of this amicable intercourse, something was said about the bishopric of Titus which at once involved them in the doctrinal question of Church government. Then alas! the floodgates were opened and they showered on each other Greek and Hebrew texts, while their eyes kindled, their cheeks glowed, their hands became clenched, and they looked more like fierce polemics about to rend each other's eyes out than Christian divines. . . . The historical value of these novels is freely acknowledged even by subsequent historians of opposing politics. 'Scott has used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a manner which may well excite their envy. He has constructed out of their gleanings works which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than theirs.'—Macaulay's "Essay on History."

of the statute books of the chief European countries shows the prevalence of a very similar spirit in each. While opposing clergy preached, exhorted, praised, and denounced, kings and statesmen enacted laws, often enforced by soldiery, in strict accordance with the views of their religious guides.¹

A calm examination of the spirit of these laws proves the existence of much the same opinion in Christendom generally about the Creator's intentions towards mankind. In the ancient days of Jewish political power the massacre and plunder of neighbouring heathen tribes, and the stolid idea that the best and wisest pagans were either odious or worthless in their Maker's sight, formed a practical part of the Jewish system.² No one reproved or tried to check this opinion more decisively than the Christian Founder. Yet

¹ Sir G. C. Lewis's "Influence of Authority."

² See Milman's "History of Christianity."

for many centuries after His death a spirit of intolerance practically identical with that He condemned prevailed among His professed believers even with reference to each other.

A remarkable resemblance in religious philosophy appears in the conduct of Christians and Mohammedans when supplanting former faiths. In each case the new religions viewed their predecessors not only with incredulity but with an utter abhorrence beyond all reasonable limits. Accordingly, religious opinions formerly cherished and trusted were rather suddenly, considering their antiquity, proclaimed most sinful as well as mistaken in the Creator's sight. The ancient Norse or Scandinavian deities became almost fiends in Christian estimation,¹ while Roman paganism, though scorned and renounced by the early Christians, gradu-

¹ See Carlyle's "Scandinavian Mythology," and Scott's "Ivanhoe."

ally regained its intellectual charm, though never its religious influence, over civilised minds. The Mohammedan triumph in Persia and Arabia showed no mercy to their ancient religions, which they eagerly supplanted, and have ever since almost ignored. During the progress of centuries the votaries of both triumphant new religions were divided among themselves, but the disputes between fellow Christians were far more numerous and implacable than those among Mohammedans. The first great division between the Eastern and Western Churches was comparatively bloodless, and free from much strife or bitter denunciation.¹ They were geographically as well as doctrinally separated, and the stationary, unproselytising Greek Church and the energetic Latin came little into actual contact. But the subsequent divisions in

¹ See Stanley's "Eastern Church." Also Milman's "Latin Christianity."

the latter, by the rise of Protestantism, aroused between them much the same intense implacable hostility previously shown by united Christians to all non-Christians. An impartial study of the leading principles of their common faith renders the mutual conduct of Roman Catholics and Protestants towards each other, during the early days of the Reformation, almost inexplicable. The Creator was generally believed by nearly all Christian divisions to condemn each other to eternal punishment for holding erroneous ideas about the personal nature of Jesus, irrespective of conduct, motive, and character. From this fate fellow Christians could only be saved by implicit faith in Roman Catholicism, or by equally implicit faith in the minute differences of detail of the various Protestant versions of Christianity. Yet by whichever means men were supposed by their fellow

men to be saved from their Maker's wrath, his policy towards mankind was thus thought practically the same by nearly all sections of the divided Christian Church.¹ The Popes, in proclamations to the Catholic world, nominally or apparently classed all non-Catholics among non-Christians. In a similar spirit, even educated Protestants acknowledged little in their ancestral religion but what they termed false, absurd, or dangerous. The great truths held in common by all Christians were apparently ignored, or practically thought of no consequence during a theological contest on points of the same doctrine. Catholics and Protestants alike recognised little if anything in the moral claim or historical identity of their common faith to sanction either words or deeds of charity towards each other. The cruelty

¹ See Milman's "Latin Christianity," Hallam's "Middle Ages," and Guizot's "Civilisation."

of political legislation truly represented the intolerant sentiments prevalent throughout nearly every Christian country.¹ When the differences between the doctrines of Greek and Latin Christianity, and subsequently between the latter and its Protestant offshoots, and, later again, between divided Protestants, are compared to the importance of those doctrines enjoined by their common Faith, the whole history of Christian controversy, since its political establishment, seems logically unaccountable. It might almost have been said by non-Christians that belief in the chief doctrines of Christianity was thought by nearly all its divisions as a matter of no importance compared to that of their points of difference. The blessing of heaven, at first thought restricted to the Greek and Latin Churches by their respective votaries,

¹ Compare Sir G. C. Lewis's "Influence of Authority" with Hallam's "Middle Ages" and Milman's "Latin Christianity."

was subsequently thought restricted to divided Protestant versions of Latin Christianity by their opposing votaries. Yet despite the differences between the Greek, the Latin, and the Protestant versions of Christianity, almost the same idea of the Creator's conduct to mankind in condemning erroneous believers to cruel and useless punishment seems evident in them all during many years of Christian history.¹ Amid these extraordinary religious dissensions among an increasing variety of Christian denominations, the ancient foes to the Faith, the Jews, during Cromwell's rule in England, enjoyed more freedom than ever before since the rise of Christianity.² Their political helplessness and complete religious neutrality, during a Christian strife throughout Britain and Ire-

¹ See Hallam's "Middle Ages," Milman's "Latin Christianity," and Lecky's "Rationalism."

² See Macaulay's "History of England."

land never equalled in sectarian bitterness, thus practically benefited the historical foes of the supreme but divided Faith. The state of western Europe, Britain, especially from the reigns of Henry the Eighth till William the Third inclusive, showed a scene of Christian civil war and intolerance, even about comparatively trifling details of the same faith, absolutely at variance with its moral teaching and general principle. The contending Christians in Britain and Ireland tried to think themselves like the Jewish description of their own nation in the old Testament, as alone upholding true religion against impious enemies. They termed their Christian fellow countrymen heathens, Amalekites and Midianites, while claiming the exclusive blessing and favour of the Creator of all mankind.¹ Even the language of

¹ See Hume's, Hallam's, and Macaulay's English histories. Also Milton's prose works and Scott's historical novels.

British poets and religious writers, who of all men might have been expected to calm the public mind, fully shared the popular prejudices. Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, regarded their ancestral version of Christianity with much the same horror as the early Christians had viewed their abandoned paganisms, or as Mohammedans viewed the superseded religions of Arabia and Persia. In all cases, deities and opinions once thought august, venerable and sacred, were not only abandoned, but transformed into their opposites. The ancient Norse deities became evil spirits, when believed in at all, in Christian estimation. Jupiter and his fellow deities became likewise not only distrusted, but abhorred or despised, while all vestiges of these pagan religions were eagerly effaced by Christian worshippers.¹

¹ "Awake, it is day : do not look for false and deceitful gods ; cast them off rather and condemn them, emerging into

The ancient Arabian and Persian faiths were likewise utterly condemned as sinful, as well as abandoned by all true Mohammedans. In historical course the Pope of Rome, once the venerated Head of all Christendom, became in the estimation of even learned Christian opponents the Man of Sin, by virtue of his position alone, an impious impostor, and a devouring enemy of the human race.¹ This utter transformation of the acknowledged Head of Christendom, from being the representative of God on earth into an incarnate spirit scarcely inferior to the devil in malevolent wickedness, was preceded, accompanied, and followed by eternal condemnation

true liberty. They are not gods—they are malignant spirits, to whom thy eternal happiness is a punishment. Juno did not so much grudge the Roman towers to the Trojans, from whom thou derivest thy carnal origin, as those demons, whom thou still thinkest gods, grudge the everlasting seats to the entire race of men.”—St Augustine’s “Exhortation to the Romans.” Ch. xxix. In “The City of God.”

¹ See Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress.”

of all non-Catholics by the Papacy. Thus religious history proves that in the opinions of united, and subsequently of divided Christians, and Mohammedans, all opponents in religious belief, even in the smallest details of the same one, were to suffer the future wrath of Him who had called all alike into brief existence in a world of conscientious disagreement and inevitable ignorance.¹

¹ See Milman's "History of Christianity" and of Latin Christianity," Hallam's "Middle Ages," and Lecky's "Rationalism."

CHAPTER VI.

ACCORDING to historical evidence, the Creator's supposed policy to mankind has remained much the same for many centuries in human belief. It has always been a general idea among Christians and Mohammedans, if not among Jews, that the human world was the scene of a constant moral conflict between a good and an evil spirit working in the hearts of short-lived men to effect their permanent happiness or misery in a future state.¹

¹ The ancient Jewish belief in the soul's immortality is avowed by Milman ("History of the Jews," Vol. I.), though Lecky states ("History of Rationalism," Vol. I.) that the Jews had probably less clear or correct knowledge of a future than any other civilised nation of antiquity. In Simpson's "Church History" (ch. i.) it is clearly stated that the Jews "excluded the rest of mankind from the hope of eternal life."

In this moral contest it was usually admitted by a majority among these religions that the evil spirit, by corrupting, obtained the majority of human souls, though all were created by the supreme, good Deity for an opposite result, yet who, after a brief worldly existence, passed as it were from their benevolent Maker to the eternal and torturing dominion of their common foe. The omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent Creator was thus supposed to create millions of men of whom a vast majority fell into the power of the malevolent spirit.¹

¹ "Among pagans, future torture was reserved exclusively for guilt. . . . It was the distinctive doctrine of Christian theologians that sufferings, more excruciating than the imagination could conceive, were reserved for millions, and might be the lot of the most benevolent and heroic of mankind."—Lecky's "Rationalism." Vol. I.

"Throughout the Middle Ages the [Christian] world after death continued to reveal more and more fully its awful secrets. . . . That hell had a local existence, that immaterial spirits suffered bodily and material torments, none, or scarcely

The latter was alleged to inspire the worldly thoughts of most men, and sug-

one speculative mind presumed to doubt."—Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. IX.

Respecting Mohammed's views on this subject, Gibbon writes :—"After the greater part of mankind has been condemned for their opinions, the true believers only will be judged by their actions."—"Decline and Fall." Vol. II.

"With more than Dantesque realism, Mohammed saw the tortures of the lost. 'They shall dwell,' he says, 'amidst burning winds and in scalding water, under the shade of a black smoke.'"—See Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," p. 192.

In one of the grandest Christian poems ever written, Mohammed, in his turn with other erroneous, religious teachers, was thus supposed to be tormented by the Creator:—

"Lo! how is Mohámmed mangled.
Before me walks All weeping.
From the chin his face,
Cleft to the forelock; and the others all,
Whom here thou seest, while they lived did sow
Scandal and schism, and therefore thus are rent.
A fiend is here behind, who, with his sword,
Hacks us thus cruelly," etc.
Dante's "Hell." (Cary's translation. Canto viii.)

Daute, according to Dean Stanley (introduction to "Eastern Church"), revealed "the feelings and thoughts of the whole age respecting this world and the next," while Milman calls him "the authorised topographer of the mediæval hell," and says that "what he embodied in verse, all men believed, feared, and hoped."—"Latin Christianity." Vol. IX. ch. ii.

gest false religious ideas, and after this life to withdraw a vast human majority to his infernal dominion. From this doom a very small minority were thought to be saved or rescued. But this rescue or salvation was to be accomplished by different means, varying according to the opinions of opposing religious communities, and yet in principle presenting a great resemblance in the alleged Divine treatment of mankind. Doubtless a more merciful and enlightened view of the Creator has always prevailed among charitable people in every religious denomination.¹

¹ "We may be quite sure that neither in the early Church, nor in any other period was this doctrine universally realised. There must have been thousands who, believing, or at least professing, that there was no salvation except in the Church, and that to be excluded from salvation meant to be precipitated into an abyss of flames, looked back, nevertheless, to the memory of a pagan mother who had passed away, if not with a feeling of vague hope, at least without the poignancy of despair."—Lecky's "Rationalism." Vol. I.

But in religious history such superior minds long existed practically before their time. They had apparently slight influence for centuries, during Jewish, Christian, or Mohammedan history, judging from the political conduct and legal enactments of men professing these religions. To modern Christian minds such exceptional specimens of human nature seem designed to preserve and transmit a true knowledge of the Creator, very gradually or imperfectly recognised even in Christian history.¹

¹ "Men will arise to whom the intuition of God as the One all-causing, all-loving, ever-enduring, will come home as the most real thing in the universe—men who at once know its truth, who live for it and die for it, and to whom all other human beliefs are as nothing in the balance."—Brace's "Unknown God," p. 294.

In British history, Richard Hooker was one of the most eminent and excellent of this class. His sentiments, which it is to be hoped now prevail generally, at least in Britain, were practically, as well as theoretically, opposed during his time by public opinion, as proved by the evidence even of British legislation. "Finally, let there be no strife ever heard of again but this, who shall hate strife most, who shall

It was not till after a long period of political rest and peace that men's minds, at least avowedly, began to show consideration for the religious opinions of each other. In almost all theological differences, from the earliest records of Jewish history till those among Christian sub-divisions, a similar idea of the Creator's policy to man appears. His former wrath against His heathen creations, as mentioned by Jewish writers in the old Testament, was thought by opposing fellow Christians to be transferred against each other; thus even British fellow Christians, especially during the reigns of Charles I., Charles II., and the Commonwealth, often compared one another to the unfortunate heathen in the old Testament.¹

pursue grace and unity with swiftest paces."—"Ecclesiastical Polity."

¹ See Hume and Macaulay's histories of England; also Scott's historical novels, "Woodstock," and "Old Mortality."

Students of religious history will perceive, from the legislative enactments of contending Christians, how much they resembled each other in believing in the Creator's unappeasable wrath towards all religious error. His anger, formerly thought to be aroused by enmity to Judaism, and subsequently by disbelief in Christianity and Mohammedanism, was finally denounced, with equal confidence, by disputing Christians against each other. Thus, briefly and historically speaking, the human intellect, in many civilised lands, from its earliest conceptions in the old Testament till the latest contests between Christian sub-divisions, has believed in the Creator's condemnation of an enormous majority of men, owing solely to their erroneous ideas of His will and nature. What underlies and supports this belief, so strongly and so long implanted in men's minds, is, apparently, a vague idea that the

God of truth is also a God of manifestation—in fact, that it is human sin that causes false notions about Him.¹ Yet the evidence of the world's history, its geography, and gradual discovery, utterly refute the idea that its Creator intended all mankind to know those truths that depend on revelation about Him. On the contrary, it is more and more evident, from the discoveries of modern geologists, travellers, linguists and historians, that countless millions of men, by the earth's terrestrial and marine formation, were designedly prevented from acquiring any such knowledge of their Maker.

One most important doctrine was apparently common to Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism—that although a large

¹ "He is specially a 'hidden God,' and with our best efforts we can only glean from the surface of the world some faint and fragmentary ideas of Him."—Newman's "Grammar of Assent," p. 392.

majority of mankind were sinful or worthless in God's sight, yet all were alike called into responsible existence by the same perfect, omniscient, omnipotent Being.¹ None of these three religions believed mankind created by the devil, though their general belief that an immense majority *naturally* incline to sin might lead to that conclusion.² On the contrary, they alike believed that all

¹ "It is common to Judaism, to Christianity, to Moham-
medanism, that they assert the will of a living Being as the
ground of all things; that they speak of Him as declaring
Himself, as exercising a continual, not an occasional, govern-
ment over men. This recognition of a Divine, personal,
unseen sovereignty; of One who is not sought out by men,
but who seeks men, who calls them and chooses them to do
His work, is the strength of all three."—Professor Maurice's
"Religions of the World." Lec. i.

² "Our ancestors were told that nature was to all intents
and purposes the playground of the devil, that the course of
nature had no fixed order, but that it could be, and con-
stantly was, altered by the agency of innumerable spiritual
beings good and bad, according as they were moved by the
deeds and prayers of men."—Huxley's preface to "Science
and Culture." See a rather similar opinion to Huxley's
"playground" in Newman's "Grammar of Assent," p. 393,

men, no matter how sinful, were the original work of a Creator possessing ineffable goodness, as well as supreme power and wisdom.

Some people allege that discussing these questions produces a presumptuous or sceptical state of mind, if not impiety. This idea has doubtless and naturally deterred many religious minds from their examination, and as much as possible from their contemplation. It is undeniable that some vain, frivolous, or impious men have written on these subjects with no apparent object but to gratify personal vanity or confirm themselves in bad habits, by thus trying to rid their minds from the fear of God, who is usually thought by religious men to punish as well as to regret the sins of His created beings. But if abstaining from considering these subjects

where he mentions mankind as apparently the "sport" of the devil.

involves an idea of the Creator wholly inconsistent with His Divine attributes of mercy and wisdom, He can then be only worshipped through terror of His power.¹ Moreover, such abstention does not always leave men's minds in humble, charitable uncertainty as some devout people may think or desire. On the contrary, the relative positions of God and the devil—"God's slavish officer of vengeance," as Milton fancies him²—towards mankind are often as clearly defined and firmly maintained as if they were proved historical facts.³ Theologians some-

¹ "It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him; for the one is unbelief, and the other is contumely."—Bacon's "Essay on Superstition."

² Comus.

³ "Dante's devils are painted as cruel executioners, with a fierce but dastardly delight in the pains they inflict."—Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. IX.—Yet Milman says Dante was "the religious poet of mediæval Christianity," and that his poem contains "the ultimate conclusions of the scholastic theology."

times describe and limit the mercies of God with the confidence and exactness of professional lawyers.¹

Thus the practical victory of a defeated evil spirit, in corrupting and finally obtaining a vast majority of his conqueror's

¹ "The Church was the predestined assemblage of those to whom, and to whom alone, salvation was possible. The Church scrupled not to surrender the rest of mankind to inexorable damnation. . . . The only point in this theory at which human nature uttered a feeble remonstrance was the abandonment of infants to eternal fires. The heart of Augustine, wrung from his reluctant reason, which trembled at its own inconsistency, a milder damnation in their favour; but some of his more remorseless disciples disclaimed the illogical softness of their master."—Dean Milman's "Latin Christianity."

Dante, in whom, Milman says, mediæval Christianity is summed up and embodied in perpetuity, thus disposes of erroneous Christian believers:—"The noble Frederick II. is in hell as an arch-heretic—as an atheist. In the same dreary circle, up to his waist in fire, is Farinata, the noblest of the Ghibellines. Dolcino is thrust down to the companionship of Mohammed."—"Latin Christianity." Vol. IX. ch. v.

"Dante was sent into our world to embody musically the religion of the Middle Ages."—Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship." Lec. iii.

human creations for his own dominion, has been constantly proclaimed even by many Christians. A vanquished yet still powerful Being was thus supposed to be the virtual ruler of a vast majority of men both in this world and in the next. Their sins, under his inspiration, disgraced human history in this world, and were punished, with himself, in that which is to come. And yet over this scene of unspeakable human failure, guilt and suffering, an all-wise, all-merciful Creator was supposed to reign in absolute power and undisputed supremacy.¹ The contradictions

¹ "That an all-righteous and all-merciful Creator, in the full exercise of those attributes, deliberately calls into existence sentient beings whom He has from eternity irrevocably destined to endless, unspeakable, unmitigated torture, are propositions which are at once so extravagantly absurd and so ineffably atrocious that their adoption might well lead men to doubt the universality of moral perceptions. . . . Those who embrace these doctrines do so only because they believe that some inspired Church or writer has taught

involved in such incompatible notions of the Creator have been often noticed by Christians, and probably by some Jews and Mohammedans also. Yet many, even to the present day, apparently hesitate to, at least avowedly, abandon them.¹ Some Christians, of different denominations, as well as some Mohammedans, not only despair of each other's salvation owing to religious error alone, but consider other members of their

them, and because they are still in that stage in which men consider it more irreligious to question the infallibility of an apostle than to disfigure by any conceivable imputation the character of the Deity"—Lecky's "European Morals." Vol. II.

¹ "Toleration, in truth, has been forced into the mind and heart of Christendom, even among those whose immutable creed is in its irrevocable words as intolerant as ever. What was proclaimed, boldly, nakedly, without reserve without limitation, and as implicitly believed by little less than all mankind, is now in large part of the civilised world hardly asserted except in the heat of controversy, or from a gallant resolution not to shrink from logical consequences."—Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. IX. ch. x.

own faith irreligious who do not agree with them in this opinion. Yet the Creator's merciful nature was always proclaimed even by those whose ideas refute the belief. He is, in fact, by many believed to be all-knowing, yet practically disappointed by His creations; all-powerful, yet to allow the devil to obtain a vast majority of them; and all-merciful, yet unable or unwilling to prevent the eternal suffering of those to whom His sole power has given bodily or mental sensations.

Though religious systems may differ in many general points of doctrine, history proves that about the relative positions of the Creator and the devil towards mankind there has long been an extraordinary resemblance, at least in the dogmatic theories of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. These perplexing if not contradictory ideas have finally inclined some thoughtful and humane,

as well as frivolous men, to atheism. By this complete denial of all religious belief, some people try to think they have at last freed themselves from contradictory and inhuman creeds; but in most historical instances men have discovered that they have only got rid of one mental difficulty to fall into others. Atheism, to wounded minds shocked at unworthy notions of the Deity, and at the intolerant bigotry of men, may afford a delusive relief, but it is no mental explanation—no intellectual enlightenment. The apparent relief to tender-hearted persons is only caused by the contradictions, cruelty, and injustice sanctioned by religious credulity or intolerance. Belief in a wise, merciful Creator, partially and variously described by the Hebrew prophets, by Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed has usually returned with irresistible, convincing force to most minds

who can overcome the perplexed depression caused by the history of human folly, degradation, and cruelty.¹

The shrinking, nervous dread of some religious men in discussing or examining the Creator's conduct towards mankind has been unworthily and unsuccessfully sneered at by atheistical writers, who have hitherto failed to influence the majority of thinking minds. While a few scornful or dreamy sceptics have throughout all ages thought and written in mental isolation, belief in the Almighty God has never been avowedly repudiated by the majority in any civilised land since the fall of

¹ "The conceptions which developing science gives of the grandeur of creation, as well as the constancy and irresistibility of its Omnipresent Cause, make all feel the comparative littleness of human power; and the awe once felt for the great man is by degrees transferred to that Universe of which the great man is seen to form but an insignificant part."—Herbert Spencer's "Scientific Essays." Vol. II.—"Representative Government."

Roman paganism.¹ It is often stated respecting free discussions on religious belief that, while they may disturb former or fixed ideas, they substitute nothing, thus leaving men's minds in painful, if not dangerous uncertainty—yet if they suggest more just principles and more practical humanity, both among Christians and non-Christians, they surely do useful work. As to the uncertainty which some devout persons dread and seem to find insupportable in religious belief, it is a state of mind which history proves to be more beneficial to human nature when contemplating the Divine than assumed or dogmatic authority

¹ "To disbelieve is to believe. If one man believes that there is a God, and the other there is no God, whichever holds the least reasonable of these two opinions is chargeable with credulity. For the only way to avoid credulity and incredulity—the two necessarily going together—is to listen to and yield to the best evidence, and to believe and disbelieve on good grounds."—Archbishop Whately's annotation to Bacon's "Essay on Atheism."

on subjects which have always been matters of opinion. Thus, if even Christian history be impartially studied, it will be found that dogmatic certainty about forms of religion has usually aroused an intolerant spirit, producing the natural result of persecuting legislation.¹

While men in dealing with each other cannot be too firm and decided in principles of justice, honesty, honour and charity, yet in announcing or discussing the Divine nature or will towards mankind any similar decision often tends to practically harden their hearts, confirm exclusive spiritual pride, and render them, perhaps unconsciously, unjust to each other. When earnest dogmatists or theologians define, limit, regulate, or interpret the Creator's intentions and mercies towards mankind, history

¹ Sir G. C. Lewis's "Influence of Authority."

proves how dangerous such assumptions of knowledge are even to the commonest rights of humanity. They arouse, foster, and establish a spirit of doctrinal exclusiveness, which, when allied with political power, has always caused injustice, and often extreme cruelty, justified in theory and enforced by legislation. Uncertainty, therefore, about the Divine nature or intentions towards man, which many think so painful or unbearable, should really be a most valuable check to human pride and presumption, which history shows constantly allied with supposed exclusive accuracy in religious belief. This uncertainty, while preserving, and as it were enforcing, doubt and humility in men's minds about the Creator's intentions towards them, should have no existence in their conduct towards each other. On this subject there should neither be doubt, hesitation, or any kind of

uncertainty. In all civilised countries, therefore, where life and property are secure, men's duties to each other, their mutual obligations and respective functions, are legally defined, limited, and regulated with minute, careful exactness;¹ but about the Creator's intentions, as well as personal nature, the very uncertainty which obscures both should specially tend to make men cautiously abstain from passing any judgment or pronouncing any decision about each other's fate in a future world. The humility of mind which such abstention causes may prove the most effectual warning against that spiritual pride, founded on assumed knowledge of the Divine policy towards man, which history proves to be fatal alike to moral justice and human happiness.

¹ "Human laws made to direct the will ought to give precepts and not counsels; religion made to influence the heart should give many counsels and few precepts."—Montesquieu's "*Spirit of Laws*." Ch. x.

CHAPTER VII.

ABOUT the time of the Protestant Reformation the discovery of America attracted the thoughts, energies, and hopes of Christian nations; but of them alone. No votaries of any other religion took the least part in its discovery and subsequent colonisation. They were alike accomplished chiefly by Portuguese, Spaniards and British; while French, Dutch and Germans took comparatively slight part in these enterprises.

This vast new region richly rewarded geographers, botanists, naturalists, soldiers, sailors, merchants, and travellers alike.¹

¹ "A consequence of the discovery of America was the connecting Asia and Africa with Europe; it furnished materials for a trade with the East Indies. . . . The navi-

Europe, wondering and rejoicing, received in welcoming harbours the useful, precious, and hitherto unknown productions of the new world. Its discovery made important changes amongst Europeans, not only in political and geographical knowledge, but even in diet, habits, and social life.

In history and theology, however, the discovery added little interest or information. No poems, traditions, songs, pictures or statues recorded or celebrated the past history of its ancient inhabitants, whose descendants have disappeared more and more throughout this vast continent, from Labrador to Patagonia.

The Spaniards and Portuguese in the middle and south, the British in the north, together with the French and Dutch

gation to Africa became necessary in order to furnish us with men to labour in the mines and cultivate the lands of America."—Montesquieu's "*Spirit of Laws*." Ch. xxii.

colonists, brought with them their religious doctrines, solely derived from the Roman Catholic and Protestant versions of Latin or western Christianity. The heathen nations made slight resistance to the new faith, that of the Peruvians being the most remarkable.¹ Their worship of the sun, apparently, rather resembled that of the Parsees, but as neither knew of the other's existence, and as their Christian rulers, whether in Asia or America, were little interested in their doctrines, no comparison seems to have ever been made between them. Yet it is evident that worship of the sun, previous to the rise of Christianity and of Mohammedanism, prevailed throughout many countries far distant from each other.² In some it was accompanied

¹ See Prescott's "Conquests of Mexico and Peru."

² "The religion of the Arabs as well as of the Indians consisted in the worship of the sun, moon, and the fixed

with human sacrifices, from which the faith of the Persian followers of Zoroaster was free, and their singular religion, still preserved by some civilised followers, seems the only form of sun worship which now survives.

From a religious point of view, the discovery and colonisation of America was a vast practical triumph of western Christianity. Neither the faith of the Eastern Church nor any other was at first introduced throughout the new continent, though recently a cession or sale of part of the extreme north has been made by the British to the Russians.

Yet religious philanthropists must regretfully own that this vast Christian extension was for many years disgraced by the massacre of a native population and by the

stars. . . . From Japan to Peru the use of sacrifice has universally prevailed."—"Decline and Fall." Ch. I.

introduction and oppression of African slaves by nominal Christian invaders, rulers, and masters. These triumphant colonists, whether Portuguese, Spanish or British, have steadily traded and communicated with their European mother - countries, pouring into them vast additions to the comfort and knowledge of the old world. Likewise, the more recent discoveries throughout Australasia and the middle of Africa have added greatly to the collections and knowledge of botanists, merchants and naturalists; but from none of these vast and newly explored regions has hitherto come the least information about the world's religious history. On the contrary, throughout these countries the Christian faith, derived from Asia and developed in Europe, is communicated by enterprising travellers or zealous missionaries. There appears a surprising absence of all antiquarian know-

ledge in these newly discovered regions. Religious enthusiasm and devotion seem unknown in them, while throughout their general colonisation Christianity seems alone to establish itself.

This geographical as well as theological development has been made more apparent, more instructive and complete, than ever by the intellectual achievements of this wonderful century. The more these new worlds are examined, explored, studied and comprehended, the more historically superior and intellectually glorious the old one must appear to all reflecting students of religious history.

It is proved by impartial study, research and examination, that nearly all religious zeal, knowledge and discussion, have been confined to the middle and south of Europe, and to the west and south of Asia. In their histories are found almost all the re-

ligious ideas, thoughts and conversions, of mankind.¹ The Jewish devotion to their ancient monotheism, and the subsequent enthusiasm of Christians and Mohammedans about their respective additions to it, infinitely surpass all other religious efforts, zeal and enterprises, ever known.

The fanciful, classic paganism, the stationary, dreamy Buddhism, the mysterious but localised faith of the Parsees, though infinitely superior to the degraded heathenisms of Arabia, Africa, America, and even to the ancient European superstitions, never, apparently, much aroused either the zeal for conversion or the spirit of martyrdom. Impartial history describes

¹ "The whole history of the Church, though usually flowing in the tracks marked out for it by the great national and geographical boundaries of the world, yet has a course not always, and therefore not of necessity, identical with the channel of human civilisation."—Dean Stanley's "Eastern Church."

the successive self-sacrificing devotion of Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, in spreading or retaining at the risk of life their different faiths, and, in the case of the two latter, their comparatively trifling differences in the same one. The amount of human energy, learning, zeal and heroism, willingly and even joyfully devoted to preserving the smallest distinctions in religious belief, is truly astonishing, yet proved by authentic history. It is also proved how seldom have these three religious denominations shown much regard or consideration for the feelings, motives and conduct of each other, at least for a long period of time. Although precisely the same firmness and sincerity of religious conviction were often shown by all three alike, they usually met with little recognition or respect except from partisans or co-religionists.

The philanthropic student of religious

history will, indeed, find much to deplore as well as admire in the extraordinary history of theological contests. During these religious disputes some most devout and learned men have often proclaimed the Creator's supposed blessings or curses upon each other with as much confidence and credulity as if they had left His presence bearing instructions how they were to address their fellow men. Political legislation, in conformity with such convictions, followed or accompanied them through centuries of human history. But geographical students will perceive that while for centuries the most learned countries in the world were involved in fearful religious contests, and alike announcing doctrines they believed essential to salvation, yet all these disputes were confined to a small minority of the human race. Although the Creator was

supposed by nearly every religion to call all men into existence, one race as much as another, yet from the clearest geographical and historical evidence a countless majority, by His own decided will, were absolutely precluded from knowing anything of those truths about His will and nature which a minority have, from the earliest ages, believed essential to salvation. Upon this subject united geographical, scientific, and historical study seem to alike refute the cruel and, perhaps unconsciously, selfish assumption of some religious minds that accurate knowledge of the Creator was essential to the salvation of men.

During centuries of Christian history the clergy were often as bigoted or intolerant as the laity; some writers allege they were more so. Still, it has been owned that clerical influence often checked and restrained

the tyranny of kings and governments.¹ This influence, however, was usually exerted in favour of co-religionists, while political rights and legal justice to religious opponents were chiefly advocated by the laity. This fact some historians consider condemnatory of the clergy, as proving inconsistency in their profession of a merciful faith, but it should be remembered, perhaps more than it is by some historians, that for a long period toleration of religious opponents was dangerous even to the very existence of prevailing denominations. A very similar bigotry among opposing sections, each believing they alone knew the essential truth, was inevitably aroused by the same spirit, shown in conscientious, often cruel, repression. Some of the best and wisest among nearly all religious denominations seemed, therefore, to practically change their natures,

¹ See Macaulay's "History of England." Vol. I.

when excited by religious controversy, or even by the slightest difference in doctrinal details. It was often, and perhaps not illogically, believed unfair or unmerciful to the many to be merciful to the few.

In the minds of ardent devotees the suppression of ideas thought fatal to salvation by the execution of their teachers was the only rescue or protection for credulous, deceived multitudes. Some worthy men, therefore, even in cases of alleged witchcraft, believed it a sacred public duty to harden their hearts and authorise or commit cruelties for the sake of preserving what they believed the essential treasure of accurate religious opinion.¹

¹ "Magic, witchcraft, spells, talismans were all the actual delusions or operations of obedient or assistant Evil Spirits. The legislature of the Church and of the State, from Constantine down to a late period, recognised as real facts all these wild hallucinations of our nature; and by arraying them in the dignity of heretical, impious, and capital offences,

The earthly punishment and future condemnation of alleged witches and magicians are conspicuous facts even in Christian history, both in Protestant and Catholic countries, and were sometimes specially sanctioned by the clergy.¹

This conscientious sacrifice of mercy and justice, often of common sense, for the sake of preserving or promoting religious ideas, is one of the most grievous spectacles presented by the impartial history of even Christian nations. "What was considered religious error by one [Christian] government was considered religious truth by another."² Accordingly, very similar laws were enacted throughout Christian Europe

impressed more deeply and perpetuated the vulgar belief."—Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. IX. ch. ii.

¹ See Hallam's "Middle Ages" (Vol. I.) on the execution of Joan of Arc for alleged witchcraft, after a trial conducted before ecclesiastics of her own nation.

² Sir G. C. Lewis's "Influence of Authority."

to suppress alleged superstition in some countries, and alleged heresy in others, by the sacrifice of mercy and justice, both of which principles are equally and nominally enjoined by all Christian divisions. The well-meant contempt with which some Christian divines have considered virtuous actions as worthless in God's sight if unaccompanied by religious accuracy is, perhaps, one of the most morally dangerous errors ever openly taught.¹ They, doubtless,

¹ "We were told that the business of each individual was to save his or her soul: that we were all sinners together—all equally guilty, unable to stir a finger, or do a thing to help ourselves. Happily we were not required to stir a finger: rather, we were forbidden to attempt it. An antidote had been provided for our sins, and a substitute for our obedience. Everything had been done for us. We had but to lay hold of the perfect righteousness which had been fulfilled in our behalf. The reproaches of conscience were silenced. We were perfectly happy in this world, and certain to be blessed in the next. If we neglected the offered grace, if through carelessness or intellectual perverseness we did not apprehend it in the proper manner, if we tried to please God ourselves by 'works of righteousness,' the sacri-

mean to thereby discourage personal pride, and prevent people praising their own good works and claiming God's blessing as their just due. Yet considering how few, even in Christian communities, can prove any good acts or qualities either in themselves or others, there is probably more harm than good done by disparaging or undervaluing the virtues of erroneous believers. The practical result of such teaching is sometimes proved to the horrified amazement of some preachers when discovering the odious construction which pride and selfishness are sure to place upon it. "We alone are in

vice would then cease to avail us. It mattered nothing whether, in the common acceptation of the word, we were good or bad, we were lost all the same, condemned by perfect justice to everlasting torture. The listeners, however, seemed delighted. They were hearing what they had come to hear—the Gospel in a nutshell; the magic formulas which would cheat the devil of his due."—J. A. Froude's description of an Evangelical prayer meeting — "Short Studies." Vol. II.

possession of the full saving truth" some men think and declare, "and therefore everything which may be necessary or serviceable in spreading or enforcing this truth must be conceded to us."¹ Accordingly, dishonest and unfeeling people are sometimes found amongst those well acquainted with religious teaching, attentive to religious services, and thoroughly familiar with religious doctrines, who, without being mere hypocrites like the Pecksniffs and Uriah Heeps of Charles Dickens, form, perhaps, a yet more numerous class of self-satisfied bigots, thoroughly gratified with themselves and the supposed exclusive value of their religious opinions.

¹ "Where this principle rules as it did for the thousand years from 500 to 1500, and where it is represented, as in these days, by some who still cling to the views of the Middle Ages, the bare idea of justice must appear a damnable delusion."—Dollinger's "Studies in European History." Ch. ix.

Many such persons at the last moment would rather see those near and dear to them guilty of fraud or cruelty than converted either to a different faith, or merely to a different section of the same one, without a stain on their moral reputation.

The unspeakable value thus placed upon religious accuracy often leads to results utterly disappointing to serious, devout minds. The belief that human virtue is worthless before God when accompanied by wrong ideas about Him is a doctrine the practical importance of which it is hard to exaggerate. That it has often actuated even Christian rulers, and inspired Christian legislation, is sufficiently evident from the pages of history. According to such believers, He is a Being who, though for centuries permitting only a small minority of men to have true knowledge of Him, is yet implacably displeased with the

ignorance of others, even when it arises entirely from His own management of His world's geography, chronology and history. This idea of the guilt of ignorance or error about God appears even in David's psalms, where heathen tribes are mentioned as fated to have their lives and lands taken from them by the Giver of both, for the sake of profiting and rewarding true believers.

Similar ideas of exclusive religious preference reappear in the Crusades, called Holy Wars, when to slay unbelievers, not in God alone but in the Divinity of Jesus, was thought by some Christians as pleasing to both.¹ In fact, the ancient Jews and the long subsequent Crusaders occupied, in their

¹ "The actual crusades against Mohammedans had not begun before they were diverted from their declared object. The [Christian] people had no sooner arms in their hands than they turned them against the first enemies—the unfortunate Jew. . . . The Crusaders would not go in search of

own estimation, a very similar position in their Creator's sight. By the former, idolators were to be massacred or plundered for the benefit of the blessed, well-informed Israelites; by the latter, resisting Mohammedans and subjected Jews were to be treated in a very similar manner by the new true believers.¹

Thus for Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, in historical course, worldly supremacy and future happiness were thought exclusively reserved by their common Maker, who they yet all believed had called both the favoured and accursed nations into brief responsible existence.

In the connected old and new Testaments, it is evident that inconsistent aspirations are occasionally found. Thus to David's

foreign foes of the Gospel and leave in their homes men equally hateful, equally obstinate, equally designated for perdition in this world and in the next."—Milman's "*Latin Christianity*." Vol. IV. ch. vi.

¹ See Dollinger's "*Studies in European History*."

persecuting sentiments, psalm cix., Christian congregations append the words, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,"¹ The wishes and feelings of the Jewish psalmist are here utterly opposed to the precepts of Jesus, yet they are alike solemnly proclaimed in Christian churches as if in perfect accord, and equally suited to the same congregations.

¹ David not only entreats the Creator to torment his fellow man, but offers suggestions how to do so. "When sentence is given upon him, let him be condemned: and let his *prayer be turned into sin*. Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread: let them seek it also out of desolate places. Let the extortioner consume all that he hath; and let the stranger spoil his labour. Let there be no man to pity him: nor to have compassion on his fatherless children," etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

THROUGHOUT religious history there has often prevailed a firm belief that if men could be taught the utmost accuracy about the Creator's will and nature, the results of such information would be sure to render them pleasing to Him. Ignorance or error about Himself He was often supposed never to pardon, but to worship Him in the most correct form or with the most carefully chosen words possible were the main objects of many religious teachers and even sincere believers. Thus they fancied the Creator to resemble an earthly king armed with despotic power, crowning with happiness those who pleased Him, and punishing with unim-

aginate severity those who did not. To know the truth about His Divine will and nature was therefore thought not only the greatest of earthly blessings, but the almost certain means of attaining felicity after this life.

On the other hand, error or ignorance about Him were considered grievous if not unpardonable offences, without reference to conduct or character.

In vain the silent evidence of geography, as well as history, contradicted these notions. Complete reliance on the extraordinary essential value of a correct religious belief, though materially weakened by the advancement of civilisation and increased national intercourse, still sometimes takes the place due only to virtuous conduct even in Christian estimation.¹ Some devout persons cannot easily free themselves from the belief that men have only to understand the Divine nature

¹ See Froude's "Short Studies."

and will to admire and obey them. But the history of even Christian nations completely refutes this idea; and when philosophically considered, it is evidently inconsistent with all that can be known of God's government of the world. It is He who is believed to solely rule its history as well as form its geography, its divisions by seas and mountains, and all its peculiar relative and distinctive characteristics.

If knowing the truth about Him were essential to human welfare, surely every nation and every individual would have been allowed an equal chance of obtaining indispensable knowledge.¹ We find, not only in history but in the records of private life, if examined without prejudice, that the

¹ "There is one moral contradiction inseparable from every form of Christianity, which no ingenuity can resolve, and no sophistry explain away. It is that so precious a gift, bestowed on a few, should have been withheld from the many, that countless millions of human beings should have been

most accurate knowledge obtainable either of God, or of what is virtuous and holy, is never sure to produce good results among men. In fact, the moral guilt arising from religious error or ignorance is as uncertain as moral superiority resulting from religious accuracy.

Impartial history, sometimes even private experience, alike prove that among some who are either ignorant of Christianity, or have erroneous ideas about it, there are found those who obey the precepts of Jesus, more than others who know all that can be known about Him. It is only by the use which people may make of knowledge that any moral good can arise. This simple truth, known to most people, yet practically not

allowed to live and die, to sin and suffer, without the one thing needful, the Divine remedy for sin and suffering, which it would have cost the Divine Giver as little to have vouchsafed to all as to have bestowed by special grace upon a favoured minority."—J. S. Mill's "Essay on Religion," p. 115.

always acknowledged, has been utterly if not avowedly ignored or contradicted throughout the terrible, yet in some respects ridiculous, contests of theological history.

On the other hand, the most absurd and fanciful ideas about the Creator are found in history to have inspired some of the best and wisest of men, for while the philosophy, poetry and history, of illustrious pagans are still the foundations of learning at Christian schools and colleges, their vanished religion is thought now as false, absurd and ridiculous, as a fairy tale. It is true that among a few of them the idea of an unknown god, probably resembling the Creator, as explained by Christianity, certainly existed; but the prevailing belief among thousands of intellectual Greeks and Romans, for centuries, was the extraordinary, and in some respects attractive, paganism transmitted in their classic writings.

Among the most illustrious of the Christian saints, Augustine is pre-eminent. His vast learning and varied knowledge arouse the admiration of the ablest Rationalist writers of this century.¹ Yet he apparently expressed rather incompatible ideas about the exclusive value of Christian belief, or at least his opinions seem capable of different constructions. While doubtful if not despairing of the salvation of unbaptized infants from eternal punishment,² he yet declared that practical Christianity existed

¹ "What is now called the Christian religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, from which time the true religion which existed already began to be called Christian." Extract from St. Augustine's works, quoted by Max Müller in his introduction to "Selected Essays," p. 5. Müller adds, "From this point of view, the words of Christ, too, which startled the Jews, assume their true meaning when He said to the Centurion of Capernaum, 'Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.'"

² See Milman's "History of Christianity."



among men before Jesus appeared at all.¹ This most important admission may be said to comprise almost all that liberality of sentiment and justification of religious toleration which so many learned and devout Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, have always denied. Its complete recognition of pagan virtue throughout the world, from the earliest times, is by St Augustine united with profound belief in Christianity, and also in the merciful and consistent wisdom of mankind's Creator. For most learned Christians know, that, during many centuries, the wisest of men, whose works still form a great part of modern Christian education, believed in a fanciful religion, and had no earthly chance of knowing any other faith. These facts are in complete

¹ See Mr Lecky's remarks on St Augustine, "History of Rationalism."

moral harmony with both the world's geographical formation and political history. They clearly prove what men often say they believe, yet sometimes practically do not, that God's government of the human race is utterly beyond their comprehension, and not to be measured or decided by those rules which may be reasonably applied to the government of men by each other. Yet it is this very Divine policy towards mankind, in defining God's future intentions as to whom He intends to bless or to curse, which has been declared with the utmost confidence by opposing theologians even among Christians. Some zealous, devout men have pronounced the Creator's future sentence on their fellow creatures with as much certainty and exactness as if they had previously been informed of the Divine decree, for history shows parts of Europe and Asia distracted,

divided and desolated, by the votaries of contending religions, each denying the common Creator's mercy or favour to the other owing to alleged religious error or ignorance. Yet during these contests, and for thousands of previous years, the Maker has continued to create millions of men, who, by His Divine arrangement of His world's geography, were hopelessly prevented from ever hearing about doctrines which a devout minority declared essential to the salvation of all. Probably no period has enlightened men's minds so much on these subjects as the present century. Human intercourse, communication, travel and foreign experience, have evidently done more to really enlighten men about each other, and to implant just principles, than any amount of lonely study, or even of great abilities, have hitherto effected. It must also be owned that, however persecuting

Christians were towards other religions, and even towards rival denominations of their own, yet to them alone nearly all the legal improvements, scientific discoveries and moral progress, of this century are due.

The present civilised world owes comparatively little to the votaries of any other faith for its modern services to man. Of all known religions, Christianity seems the one least permanently injured, weakened or tainted, by the follies, vices and errors, of its followers. In some respects, indeed, it seems never to have been so practically understood as at the present time.¹ Its

¹ "A Roman of the age of Pliny, an Englishman of the age of Henry VIII., and an Englishman of our own day, would all agree in regarding humanity as a virtue, and its opposite as a vice; but their judgments of the acts compatible with a humane disposition would be widely different. The humane man of the first period might derive keen enjoyment from those gladiatorial games which an Englishman, in the days of the Tudors, would regard as atrociously barbarous; and

principles seem in complete harmony with the civilised spirit of the age, and yet were believed to sanction the most opposite ones during mediæval history.¹

It was evidently invoked and believed in by men of totally different characters, and thought to encourage what are now considered the most unchristian sentiments in private conduct and public legislation. Thus we find that some learned historians and profound thinkers, though educated as Christians, have yet disavowed, or to a great extent repudiated, their faith owing, apparently in some cases, to their disgust and horror at the conduct of Christian professors, rulers and legislators. Voltaire,

this last would, in his turn, acquiesce in many sports which would now be emphatically condemned."—Lecky's "European Morals" (Introduction).

¹ See the evidence accumulated in Hallam's "Middle Ages," Milman's "Latin Christianity," and Lecky's "Rationalism."

Hume and Gibbon disbelieved or sneered at the same faith to which many of their learned predecessors, contemporaries and successors, felt the most complete devotion. Without preferring any other religion, these great men evidently distrusted, without, perhaps, quite rejecting, a faith whose principles their historical knowledge proved was often at complete variance with the conduct of its sincere believers.¹

It sounds strange to say that the Christian feelings of these writers in some measure alienated them from the historical Christi-

¹ "The Christianity which Voltaire assailed was not that of the Sermon on the Mount. . . . Men spoke to him of the mild beams of Christian charity, and where they pointed, he saw only the yellow glare of the stake; they talked of the gentle solace of Christian faith, and he heard only the shrieks of the thousands and tens of thousands whom faithful Christian persecutors had racked, strangled, gibbeted, burnt, broken on the wheel." — Morley's "Voltaire," pp. 221-243.

anity of their time and of the Middle Ages. Yet it was evidently no preference for any other faith, no selfish, mean, or worldly temptation that inspired their distrust of a religion whose principles they advocated, while keenly exposing its practical violation by fanatical, frivolous, or ignorant professors.¹

¹ "The really efficient weapons with which the philosophers assailed the evangelical faith were borrowed from the evangelical morality. The ethical and dogmatic parts of the Gospel were unhappily turned against each other. . . . Irreligion, accidentally associated with philanthropy, triumphed for a time over religion accidentally associated with political and social abuses."—Macaulay's essay on Ranke's "History of the Popes." These remarks apply especially to Voltaire and his French admirers, yet they seem, in some respects, applicable to both Hume and Gibbon.

CHAPTER IX.

It might seem to a thoughtful mind that the revolt of civilised, enlightened men against Christianity was a special rebuke to its bigoted, unworthy professors, who beheld with dismay so much historical knowledge and wisdom turned against the faith in which these eminent writers were born and educated. Yet, as if their intellectual revolt was permitted only as a temporary warning to unworthy believers in Christianity, that faith, after they disappeared, resumed its spiritual sway over the most learned, historical writers, whose knowledge was even greater than theirs. But this resumption was in every sense purely intellectual, and, therefore, the more philosophically reassuring. It was wholly free

from the degrading excitement of religious or political triumph. No injury or insult was offered to the memories or followers of these anti-Christian writers, which assuredly would have been the case in former times.

On the contrary, their talents and good qualities are now freely acknowledged and admired by highly enlightened, accomplished, as well as religious minds, viewing their distrust of Christianity as the natural result of its practical violation by unworthy professors, yet whose own belief remains unshaken alike by the errors of believers or by the merits of opponents.

Lord Byron, referring to Voltaire and Gibbon, says :—

“They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame
Of Heaven, again assail'd, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign do more than
smile.”

Byron refers to Gibbon as

“Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer ;
The lord of irony—that master spell,”

adding that they were both doomed

“To the zealot’s ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.”

“Childe Harold.” Canto iii.

During this century, however—especially its latter half—neither the sceptic’s “irony” nor the “zealot’s ready Hell” seem to preserve anything like their former influence, for different versions of Christianity prevail over all civilised countries, where the “master spell” is often invoked without weakening, far less destroying, its ascendancy ; while the “zealot’s ready Hell” is seldom invoked to silence the endless doubts which now safely assail every existing belief, yet which hitherto have not only failed to upset either Judaism, Christianity or Mohammedanism, but have had no effect in weakening even Buddhism or the faith of the Parsees.

It is one of the lessons of impartial history how often men are, perhaps unconsciously, governed by their fellow men in matters avowedly beyond the knowledge of all alike. Thus, on the minds of Voltaire, Gibbon and Hume—three of the most eminent Christians who ever revolted against Christianity—the cruelty of the Inquisition, the zealous intolerance of the early Christians when overthrowing Roman paganism, and the bigotry of English Christian divisions, produced those results in their minds which Macaulay, their great historical successor, so admirably describes, but always in a religious spirit.

In the revolting cruelties committed or authorised by some zealous Christians, not only on unbelievers but on opposing members of their own faith, the character of its Founder was done injustice to alike by His ardent followers and by those

calm observers of mankind whose faith in Christianity, being shaken by its conscientious violation, forgot that the words of Jesus had previously inspired their own humane ideas. In the hope or expectation of the stern Christian Tertullian to behold the future torture of unbelievers as an eternal consolation for the persecutions endured by the early Christians;¹ in the atrocities of the Inquisition, though perhaps committed from conscientious motives; and in the degrading display of religious bigotry recorded in Christian history, the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount was completely disobeyed.² Yet these atrocities

¹ "How shall I rejoice, how exult when I behold so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians." —"Decline and Fall." Vol. II. ch. xv. Yet Tertullian was no ignorant believer, but an eminent scholar, whose "literary activity" lasted fully thirty years.—See Salmon's "Introduction to the New Testament." Part I. p. 42.

² "The political principles of Christianity are laid down

with the men whose folly or wickedness committed them, have disappeared. Their humane, eloquent denouncers have also vanished from the world, leaving Christianity still prevailing over successive generations, who, now free from persecution or mental restraint, safely compare the teaching and example of the Christian Founder with the extraordinary misinterpretations of professing and perhaps sincere believers. They can, therefore, appreciate the noble feelings and principles which unbelievers have expressed or advocated without sharing their distrust of that faith which, in its enlightened construction, seems destined to reign unrivalled over the majority of civilised men.

Though the spirit of the present age, as shown in social habits as well as political legislation, seems much in accordance

for us in the Sermon on the Mount."—Newman's "Development of Christianity." Ch.

with the just, philosophical views of these sceptical writers, yet Christianity is still in the ascendant wherever civilisation prevails. Their enlightened views of human justice and moral welfare are practically more appreciated than ever during this century, yet without weakening the acknowledged influence or the political extension of Christianity. This extension is chiefly due to the increasing number of Christian colonists, travellers and explorers, throughout newly discovered parts of the world, while those which are already Christian never exchange their faith for any other.

Yet Christianity is now seldom promoted by military conquest, or even by national conversion, but is chiefly spread by the intercourse and diffusion of Christian races.¹

¹ "After eighteen centuries, Christianity is still nearly confined to Europeans and the descendants of Europeans."—Mill's "Essay on Liberty," p. 24.

Lord Beaconsfield declares that all countries wither which refuse the Cross, yet he also states that the unconverted Jews—certainly the most civilised people who still do so—are more numerous than ever. They are now usually superior to Mohammedans in education and civilisation, but this superiority may not always have been the case.¹

When the Saracens and Moors ruled in Arabia, Assyria and the south of Spain, the Jews throughout Christendom had few rights, and certainly no influence or privilege.² Since that period Mohammedanism throughout Europe has politically declined,

¹ See Mr Gladstone's essay on the Turks in Bulgaria, who, though now the chief Mohammedan nation, he compares, to their disadvantage, with the Saracens and Moors of former times. "Not less rapid and wonderful than the expansion of the Mohammedan Empire and religion was the growth of Mohammedan civilisation—the highest, it should seem, attainable by the Asiatic type of mankind."—Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. II.

² See Hallam's "Middle Ages," and Milman's "Latin Christianity."

while the Jews in many European countries have been both politically strengthened and socially elevated. Their continuing to refuse the Cross certainly does not arise, as it may in other nations, from ignorance of Christianity, with whose votaries they are in some countries on the most friendly terms. It may now, indeed, be said they are the only civilised people that utterly reject Christianity, as educated Mohammedans, while preferring their own prophet, view both the character of Jesus and His reception by the Jews much as Christians do. But unconverted Judaism must preserve an opinion about Him totally different from that of any other religion in the world.

The political success of Christianity seems the more remarkable and exceptional when examined and compared to that of

any other religion. Dr Paley says¹ that "a Jewish peasant changed the faith of the world without power, force, or support." That He changed the faith of the Roman Empire would have been a more correct expression, as before the colonisation of America the greater part of the world knew nothing of Christianity, and a great part of the old rejects it to this day. Its success, however, was promoted by very different means from what might have been expected by learned historians or devout theologians. It was achieved, apparently, neither by Jesus nor by His immediate followers. His personal mission began and ended among the rigid, devout nation with whom He lived, and who never abandoned the faith which they accused Him of deserting. Instead of addressing wise pagans, many of whom scarcely believed in a faith utterly

¹ "Evidences of Christianity." Part III. ch. viii.

below their mental conceptions, the voice of Jesus was never heard except in Syria, and was almost exclusively addressed to the Jews. It was not till after Christianity was diffused among intelligent, unprejudiced Greeks and Romans that its political success began.¹ From that time its triumph, though not its extension, was almost as complete and profound as could have been imagined in the dream of a Christian saint. Its triumph over the European paganisms was absolute, almost unopposed, unregretted, and essentially permanent. Jupiter and Odin alike vanished from popular belief, respect and admiration, while Christian cathédrales and monastic establishments accompanied or soon followed the prevalence of Christianity throughout Europe. Since its establishment,

¹ Under most of the Roman emperors who reigned in the third century, Christianity presented no obstacle to the attainment of public honours."—Mosheim. Ch. i.

except for atheistic revolts, chiefly in France, and always politically suppressed, Christianity has reigned supreme throughout nearly all Europe, and politically over all countries conquered or colonised by its different nations.

When we contemplate all other existing faiths, the Parsees and the Buddhists, may, indeed, attract antiquarians, students, and historians, but they neither evince the will nor the power to effect conversions from either Judaism, Christianity, or Mohammedanism.

In religious history it seems evident, despite the common desire of opposing divisions for supreme rule, that adversity, provided it has not the power to exterminate, elevates and improves the religious systems which endure it. Thus, since the political subjection of the Jews by pagans, Christians and Mohammedans, they have been free from idolatry, which in their days of power often

grieved the souls of their kings and prophets. "The purifying fire" of adversity evidently preserved their faith on a far surer basis than during its political power or independence. In the Christian divisions similar results also appear. Since the rise of Protestantism, its hostile scrutiny and watchfulness about Roman Catholicism have apparently tended to render the choice of Popes far more careful and excellent than in their days of undisputed supremacy. Cardinal Newman forcibly alludes to unworthy Popes of former times in a spirit of truthful examination, historic knowledge, yet steady faith.¹ In these historical instances of the moral danger in undisputed supremacy the mingled strength and weakness of human

¹ "Our Lord opens the prospect of ambition and rivalry in His religions leading members when He warns His disciples against desiring the first places in His kingdom, nay, of grosser sins, in His description of the ruler who 'began to strike his fellow servants, and to eat and drink and be

nature seem remarkably developed. Religious history, when impartially studied, seems to describe it more instructively than political narration is able to do, in some respects. The latter is always more or less guided by temporal interests and worldly events, while the former, though comparatively uninfluenced by these causes, yet raises and lowers men to the most extreme degrees of mental sublimity and degradation of which human nature is capable.

drunken'—passages which have an awful significance, considering what kind of men have before now been His chosen representatives, and have sat in the chair of His Apostles.”—*“Grammar of Assent,”* p. 449.

CHAPTER X.

IN examining religious history during the last few centuries, especially in the present, the social and political elevation of the Jews seems one of its most remarkable facts.¹

From the earliest records of European Christian governments, the oppressions endured by the Jews under them, though utterly at variance with the spirit, was yet what might have been expected from the

¹ "Expatriation, captivity, confiscation, torture on the most ingenious, and massacre on the most extensive scale; a curious system of debasing laws, which would have broken the heart of any other people, have been tried in vain. The Jews, after all this havoc, are probably more numerous at this date than they were during the reign of Solomon the Wise."—Beaconsfield's "Life of Bentinck" (written in 1852).

early history of Christianity; for while the former enjoined mercy and forgiveness, the latter recorded, in hymns, narratives, pictures and images, the irritating, grievous spectacle of the Christian Founder expiring on a cross by the will and influence of the Jewish race.¹ Thus their descendants, though harmless and inoffensive, were for many centuries cruelly persecuted. or oppressed both in England and throughout the European continent.²

During and since the Protestant Reformation, the Jews in many parts of Europe gradually ceased to be either persecuted or insulted, yet were long excluded from

¹ "All early paintings and sculptures throughout Europe were religious in subject—represented Christ, crucifixion, apostles, saints. They formed integral parts of Church architecture, and were among the means of exciting worship."—Herbert Spencer's essays. Vol. I. "Progress: its Law and Cause."

² See Hallam's "Middle Ages," Lecky's "Rationalism," and Milman's "History of Christianity."

any social or political privileges. The oppression which they still experience occasionally in Russia and parts of Germany seems to arise, at least in the former country, more from political suspicion than religious fanaticism. This century has seen them in many European lands, however, not only freed from legal disability, but gradually admitted to offices of trust, power, and responsibility.¹ Their altered position, especially in England, has inevitably brought their religious ideas, feelings

¹ "For hundreds of years Israel has striven after and finally succeeded in obtaining equal rights of citizenship in almost all the countries of Europe. Russia, Spain and Portugal, still withhold them. They are wanting, also, in the Mohammedan world. In Europe, the Jews in general are in possession of all social and political rights. . . . The principal motives of the popular hatred against them [in Germany] turn upon the economic injuries caused by wringing profits out of the peasantry in the Slavonic and even in some of the German countries through their still favourite occupation of bartering and usury."—Dollinger's "Studies in European History." Ch. IX.

and sentiments, more and more in contact with those of the most learned Christians around them. Their deism is no longer avowed with fear and trembling, but boldly made the subject for free and open discussion with their most devout Christian fellow countrymen.¹ Their conduct in many instances, indeed, refutes the idea formerly very prevalent that all virtues were inseparable from Christianity, or could only be found among those inevitably ignorant of it. Many European Jews know as much about Christian doctrines as Christians do, while faithfully preserving their ancestral

¹ Dante perhaps perceived, or rather foresaw, for in his time the Jews were powerless indeed, the influence they might acquire in Christian cities:—

“ . . . Be ye more staid
 Oh, Christians! not like feather by each wind
 Removable; nor think to cleanse yourselves
 In every water. Either Testament—
 The Old and New, is yours, and for your guide
 The Shepherd of the Church. Let this suffice
 To save you . . .
 . . . Nor let the Jew who dwelleth in your streets
 Hold you in mockery.”

“Paradise. Canto v. (Gary's Translation)

deism, yet many of them fully exhibit those excellent moral qualities which some Christian enthusiasts have imagined to be only found among believers in Jesus. As long as earnest Christians were personally debarred from intercourse with non-Christians, belief in the exclusive merit of their own faith was perpetuated through centuries of national and doctrinal ignorance and exclusiveness. Jesus was then often thought the *sole* teacher of those high moral qualities which adorn, improve and elevate modern civilisation. To Him alone was sometimes attributed the cultivation or existence of every good quality. Thus the word Christian was constantly applied to every virtue, and un-Christian to every vice. But the lessons of modern civilised life, and the practical result of free intercourse with non-Christians, have greatly modified the ignorant and, perhaps, unconscious unfairness of these

ideas among Christians. Of all unbelievers in Jesus the Jews still remain the most remarkable and interesting. They cannot be ranked among ignorant Buddhists, who, despite their many excellent doctrines, know nothing of Christianity; or with Mohammedans, whose ardent preference for their own prophet prevents their studying Christian doctrine with unprejudiced minds. But educated, civilised Jews are attracted by no other prophet, and influenced by no rival teacher: their Almighty God, the original Creator, is the same as the God of the Christians. Their Bible history is the same as the Christian till the birth of Jesus. Then comes the great divergence, all Christians believing the old and new Testament firmly connected—the former prophesying the latter, and the latter fulfilling the former—while the Jews utterly repudiate the connection, maintaining that

the old Testament is the sole exponent of religious truth. The new, they now admit, describes an illustrious member of their race. They may regret or censure His execution, and have, according to a high authority, ceased to regard Him with ancestral hatred.¹ But his position between God and man, which Jesus either claimed for Himself or which was subsequently claimed for Him, according to different historical versions, the Jews utterly deny.

The vast political progress of Christianity throughout the world, which every year strengthens as Christian influence and colonisation increase, may now be said to be usually accompanied by the social and political progress or elevation of Judaism. Yet its triumph or elevation is achieved in a very different manner from that of Christians.²

¹ Farrar's Preface to "Life of Christ."

² Cardinal Newman, possessing all the intellectual advant-

The latter conquer and invade, explore and influence, more or less every known country in the world. Their triumphs, unlike those of any other religion, have been as firm as they are extensive. Neither Mohammedanism nor Judaism, the only two remaining religions of political importance, have made much material progress during this century. All European Mohammedanism is now confined to a few Turkish provinces completely at the mercy of Christian powers, who maintain Mohammedan authority over them owing to jealousy of each other. In Africa, Mohammedanism is greatly under the influence of

ages of the nineteenth century, when describing the relative positions of Jews and Christians, shows something of the spirit of the Middle Ages. "The two children of the promise have ever been found together—of the promise forfeited and the promise fulfilled—and whereas the Christian has been in high place, so the Jew has been degraded and despised. . . . Christianity clears up the mystery which hangs over Judaism, accounting fully for the punishment of the people by specifying their sin."—"Grammar of Assent," p. 432.

England and France. The Moors of Morocco are overawed by their French neighbours in Algiers. The Mohammedans of northern and parts of eastern Africa, as well as Egypt, all more or less under the Turkish Sultan's authority, are too much afraid of Christian power to defy its political influence. Likewise throughout Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Tartary and Asiatic Turkey, Mohammedan power is no longer aggressive. Russian supremacy throughout the entire north of Asia, from the Caucasus to Kamstchatka inclusive, keeps Turks, Persians, Afghans and Tartars, in constant fear of practical subjection along their vast boundary. The Buddhists in Mongolia, Thibet China, and Burmah, are likewise politically powerless. In fact, the supremacy of the Russians throughout the entire north of Asia, and that of the British throughout India, may be said to give them the control of almost

all Asia, either by their actual power or indirect influence.

India, England's chief Asiatic conquest, presents Mohammedanism in a different position from what it occupies in other lands. Instead of dreading the Russians, like the Tartars, or quarrelling with Greek and Armenian subjects like the Turks and Persians, the Indian Mohammedans under British rule strive to convert their Hindu fellow subjects, and often with success.¹ In fact, both in India and parts of Africa, where Mohammedans are in

¹ "In India, Christianity and Mohammedanism now confront each other face to face, as they have never met before throughout history, in one great neutral country of paganism. The Mohammedan faith has still, at least, a dignity and a courageous unreasoning certitude which in western Christianity have been perceptibly melted down and attenuated by long exposure to the searching light of European rationalism, whereas the clear, unwavering formula of Islam carries one plain line straight up toward heaven, like a tall obelisk pointing direct to the sky without shadow of turning. It thus possesses a strong attraction for Hindus who are seeking an escape from the labyrinth of sensual polytheism."—Lyall's "Asiatic Studies." Ch. X.

close contact with polytheists or heathens, they show an energy and a mental superiority which they seem to have lost, at least comparatively, in every other part of the world.¹ The brilliant career of Mohammed, compared with the vague traditions describing the mild, peaceful Buddha, and which do little more than report the existence of the almost unknown Zoroaster, give the Arab prophet immense, if not unfair, advantages over both, while the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism, and its union with all the intellectual power and genius of mediæval Europe, combine to give that faith a complete and perhaps a permanent ascendancy over all European races.

¹ "In India, where the Moslem creed retains its relative superiority to the superstitions of the native races, the Mussulman is a higher order of being. Were the English to withdraw, he would retake the sovereignty of the peninsula by natural right—not because he has larger bones and sinews, but by superiority of intellect and heart; in other words, because he has a truer faith."—Froude's "Short Studies." Vol. II.

The vast new worlds of America and Australasia are almost completely subjected by the power and influence of Christian colonists. No newer religion than Mohammedanism has arisen since Christianity, which, unlike the latter, instead of extending its political boundaries, is in military strength declining. Yet while Christianity is solely triumphant throughout the world, while its doctrines as well as political power are surely, though comparatively slowly, extending also, it is either losing strength or becoming more doubted in the chief countries, or rather in the chief cities of Europe. In these abodes of learning, wealth, art, science and peaceful study, its constant companion and historical associate, the invincible Judaism, seems influencing Christian thought, legislation and philosophy, more than at any previous period. Cardinal Newman declares that, considering the adversities endured by the Catholic ver-

sion of Christianity, "it is inconceivable that it should not have been broken up and lost were it a corruption of Christianity," etc. Yet surely all adversities suffered by any Christian denomination have been surpassed by those which Judaism has endured and survived.¹ Macaulay, in a somewhat similar spirit of wonder, though animated by different motives, when describing the persecutions of Roman Catholicism by fellow Christians and infidels, agrees with Dryden that "it was fated not to die."² Yet all that these great Christian writers—Catholic and Protestant—say on this subject can be urged with yet greater force on behalf of Judaism. Its survival is surely more remarkable, and its

¹ "The number of the Jews throughout the world at present has been approximately calculated at twelve millions; should this be an exaggeration, it is yet certain that the number far exceeds that which was ever attained in ancient times, even at the period of political independence."—Dollinger's "Studies in European History." Ch. ix.

² Essay on Ranke's "History of the Popes."

adversities far more dangerous than those endured by Christianity. The latter soon found credulous if not appreciative minds among pagan Greeks and Romans. Their weak and vanishing theology, always more or less distrusted by some of their wisest men, found few eager defenders.¹

Christianity once established on the latter's ruin, never encountered any doctrinal rivalry worthy of the name. Subsequent Mohammedanism completely extinguished Arabian heathenism — the religion of the prophet's ancestors. It also obstructed, and doubtless delayed, the progress of Christianity, but it can hardly be said to have rivalled it except in territorial conquest.

¹ "We see opinions, usages and systems, which are of venerable and imposing aspect, but which have no soundness within them. . . . Such was the established paganism of classical times, which was the fit subject of persecution, for its first breath made it crumble and disappear."—Newman's "Development of Christianity." Ch. i.

Its triumph was always over heathenism or vague, superstitious religious systems. It, moreover, resembled Judaism or Christianity far more than any of the religions it overcame or suppressed. In many respects this most modern of all established faiths confirmed both, though its hostility to their votaries, and their enmity to it, are depressing historical facts to all civilised philanthropists.¹ The warlike energy of Christianity and Mohammedanism, though often directed against each other, yet alike extinguished the ancient heathenisms of Europe, Arabia and northern Africa: all these triumphs achieved by martial valour, accompanied by earnest, fervent preaching, were alike eloquently and proudly celebrated by Christians and Mohammedans. The attractive glory of

¹ See Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism."

overthrowing or converting empires, kingdoms, and even vast continents, or replacing cruel, ignorant and debasing, religious systems have excited Christians and Mohammedans to such an extent that they have apparently overlooked the equally if not more wonderful triumph or vitality of ancient, hereditary, unchanged Judaism. The latter's triumph, however, was proved by survival, not by propagation or conquest. It could hardly be safely recorded or described by a subjected people living for centuries entirely under Christian or Mohammedan rule. Its heroic revival, however, in passive subjection enduring for centuries the persecutions and tyranny of both Christians and Mohammedans, is perhaps to unprejudiced intellectual observers as complete or as wonderful a triumph of religious conviction as was ever accomplished by

Christian eloquence or Mohammedan warfare.¹

¹ "The Jew has rendered to the world so many good and so many bad services, that people can never be just to him: this person, so little a soldier, so little chivalrous, who loves neither Greece, nor Rome, nor Germany, and to whom, nevertheless, we owe our religion, so much so that the Jew has a right to say to the Christian: 'Thou art a Jew with a little alloy'; this being has been set as the object of contradiction and antipathy—a fertile antipathy which has been one of the conditions of the progress of humanity."—Renan's "Anti-Christ." Ch. xi.

CHAPTER XI.

IN reviewing the moral and social aspects of history, even in Europe alone, since the establishment of Christianity, its slow influence in political rule and legal enactment is surprising to contemplate. Voltaire, Hume and Gibbon, seem so convinced of this fact that probably their somewhat similar distrust of it is partly caused by disappointment at the great perplexing difference between theory and practice during many years of Christian supremacy. Yet the rejection of Christianity, perhaps partly from the same cause, by the Roman emperors Julian and Marcus Aurelius was never supported by

any pagan energy or enthusiasm in behalf of that vanishing faith.¹ For Christianity had penetrated among all classes alike throughout the European portion of the Roman Empire. Its popular and general diffusion, unlike the partial growth of atheism and scepticism, comprehended the ignorant and most learned indiscriminately in its profound moral conquest. This result was preceded, accompanied and succeeded, by the exertions and example of the Christian saints. Their efforts, lives and successes, before and during the political triumph of Christianity, deserve, more attention than they usually obtain from many historians. In the history of no other faith are found men and women—sometimes highly educated, sometimes ignorant; rich and poor, old and young, and not restricted to any par-

See Mr J. Mill's ("Essay on Liberty") remarks on the opposition of Marcus Aurelius to Christianity.

ticular nation—who since the death of Jesus have gone, as some unbelievers might think, almost mad about His memory, doctrine, will, and future intentions towards mankind.¹ In some cases the intense devotional fervour of these enthusiasts apparently exceeded that of the first Apostles. The latter announced and preached about Him with patient firmness and fearless determination, often at risk of life, yet they were far more practical and self-controlled than many of the subsequent saints. These ardent devotees not only thought, wrote, and preached in behalf of Jesus, but often suffered *self-imposed* torments to prove their devotion to Him which no one who had known Him personally ever endured. Whether He would have approved their conduct, despite their devout

¹ “Ancient Rome produced many heroes, but no saint. Its self-sacrifice was patriotic, not religious.”—Lecky’s “European Morals,” Vol. I.

motives, may be doubted, or, at least, must remain uncertain.¹

But among these saints His few words, short life and resurrection, produced an impression almost beyond the power of language to describe. In their vivid minds and ardent imaginations the crucified teacher was the everlasting ruler and promoter of all their thoughts, actions and hopes. While their personal heroism, devoted charity and self-denying sincerity, aroused the admiration of the devout, and the wonder of the sceptical; their voluntary sufferings, disregarding all rules of health and self-preservation, were at times almost suicidal.¹ They

¹ "A man may be as truly selfish about the next world as about this. Where an overpowering dread of future torments, or an intense realisation of future happiness, is the leading motive of action, the theological virtue of faith may be present, but the ennobling quality of disinterestedness is assuredly absent."—Lecky's "European Morals." Vol. II.

² See Mr Lecky's remarks on this subject ("European Morals." Vol. II.).

were a class who, despite the most extraordinary conduct, were yet always above the ridicule or contempt even of the frivolous. They were scrupulous to the last degree of which the most sensitive conscience is capable about religious principles, while utterly, rather than proudly, indifferent to human advantages, sufferings, or estimation.¹ Some Christian saints whose eventful lives, profound sanctity and devoted energy, have made their names immortal, are yet so obscured by fabulous tradition that the real truth about them seems almost impossible to ascertain. Even of the so-called patron saints

¹ "Let us reckon Paradise as our country. A great number of dear ones awaits us there—a full and plenteous crowd of parents, brethren and children, secure of its own safety, but anxious for our salvation, longs for us. What a supreme and perpetual happiness! There is the glorious choir of the Apostles; there the number of exulting prophets; there the innumerable population of martyrs, crowned on account of the contest and of the suffering."—St Cyprian's letter, "Extracts from the Fathers and Church Historians."

in Europe—St Denis of France, St James of Spain, St George of England, St Andrew of Scotland, and St Patrick of Ireland—much less is known to an enlightened and studious posterity than might, perhaps, be expected. Among them St Patrick seems to be the most respected at the present day. The others have more or less vanished into the regions of vague tradition, so obscured by fanciful associations—bequeathed by ignorant superstitious minds—that their lives or actions have completely yielded in interest to national preachers and warriors of later days.¹

St Patrick, however, still retains a national interest for Irishmen, which seems compara-

¹ "Each kingdom of Christendom had its tutelar saint. . . . For the dignity of most of these saints there is sufficient legendary reason, as of St Denis in France, St James in Spain, St Andrew in Scotland, St Patrick in Ireland. England, however, instead of one of the old Roman or Saxon saints, placed herself under the tutelar guardianship of a saint of very doubtful origin—St George."—Milman's "Latin Christianity." Vol. IX. ch. ii.

tively lost by the others in their respective countries. He is often strangely identified with the religious contests usually accompanying Irish politics even of the present day. He is often claimed exclusively by Irish Roman Catholics, while Irish Protestants generally feel or manifest comparatively little interest about him. Yet when he and the other patron saints lived, disputes among fellow Christians were almost if not quite unknown. Their efforts were completely devoted to replacing heathenism by Christianity. When once they had established or proved its cause, their earthly work was done. They then disappeared, leaving to a more studious, learned posterity to argue about details of the same doctrine, to the first announcement of which they had devoted their energetic lives. But though these few patron saints were never quite forgotten in their different lands, a great number subse-

quently succeeded in spreading or confirming Christianity with a zealous enthusiasm equal to that of the first Apostles. In firm confidence, patient heroism and untiring devotion, they were usually as calm, resolute and determined, as if Jesus had stood beside them. The rewards and the triumphs, the trials and the sufferings of this world, were literally nothing to them. Although their human nature perished like that of other men, their minds, to the last moments of apparent existence, were as firm and undaunted as when they enjoyed full bodily vigour, and were in complete personal safety. Unattracted by the brilliant vestiges of pagan learning and accomplishments, these devotees, both men and women, were completely absorbed, engrossed and ruled, by the short history and few precepts of Jesus. They recognised in His few recorded words and brief existence their practical guide, model, and future hope.

For them the beauties of pagan literature and art, though some were acquainted with both, possessed little interest and no allurements.¹ Their lives were devoted, amid every sort of danger, to the study of Christ's teaching, its diffusion, explanation, and practical imitation. Some of them were eminently learned, others surprisingly ignorant, yet alike equally absorbed in mental contemplation of Jesus. Some withdrew entirely from human intercourse and lived in rigid seclusion, while others mingled often in society. Yet all were inspired by the same resolve to spread and confirm belief in Christianity. Their powers of endurance and apparent health under the

¹ "St Augustine possessed, and was unembarrassed, by the possession of all the knowledge which had been accumulated in the Roman world. He commanded the whole range of Latin literature. But all his knowledge and all his acquirements fell into the train of his absorbing religious sentiments or passions."—Milman's "History of Christianity." Vol. III. ch. x.

greatest sufferings seem little short of incredible. So great, indeed, were their hardships, and so extraordinary their bodily health, vigour, and energy during them, that belief in direct inspiration was naturally strengthened by their almost exhaustless powers, both of physical and mental endurance. In religious history, the lives of Christian saints form one of its most astonishing chapters, and one which has, perhaps, not been sufficiently examined even by many learned writers on theological history. Were the Creator to ever inspire men by direct communication with injunctions to secrecy, they would probably behave much as these saints really did. They neither courted nor dreaded the admiration, power, or hatred of mankind. With an invincible resolve, free alike from all boasting, eager enthusiasm, or personal ambition, they sought to spread belief in Christ's doctrines, and often succeeded,

though by methods totally different from any historical precedent. They seemed to stand between this and a future world, as sure of one as of the other, utterly regardless of personal feelings, interests, or estimation, devoting life in every act and thought to diffuse Christianity among their fellow men. The wise, practical historians, Hume and Gibbon, and the humane, witty, sarcastic Voltaire, seem alike puzzled at their conduct, motives, and success. They apparently think them zealots, crazy enthusiasts, or excitable, dreamy fanatics, while more modern and even better educated sceptical writers like M. Renan evince far greater admiration for them. They were evidently animated by a religious fervour infinitely greater than mere enthusiasm, and never before equalled in human history. Of course, this fervour arose entirely from the firmness of their historical belief. To them,

Jesus, by His resurrection, had proved the truth of His assertions.¹ All Christian saints, therefore, believed in their Prophet's final triumph as thoroughly as if, like Mohammed, He had died after a glorious earthly career. The religious influence of such practical believers pervaded all classes in Europe during centuries of Christian history. Accordingly, their venerated names were given to different islands, towns, streets and churches, which preserve them till this day.

So great was Roman Catholic reverence for these saints that Protestants, disgusted at what they thought superstitious regard, have comparatively ignored them.² The contempt or indifference shown towards them by some

¹ See Milman's "History of Christianity," and Newman's "Development of Christian Doctrine," on the subject of belief in the resurrection.

² See Dean Stanley's remarks on this subject in his Preface to the "Eastern Church."

Protestant and most sceptical writers is perhaps as unreasonable as the extraordinary reverence of some Roman Catholic devotees.¹ Their great and undeniable influence in Christian history has, therefore, rarely been described with fairness, and scarcely obtained the general attention it deserves.² In fact, they sometimes seem viewed with almost opposite feelings of intense, unquestioning reverence or contemptuous indifference. Thus the works, lives and thoughts, of many illustrious pagans of antiquity are constantly translated, studied and discussed, with an ad-

¹ "There is a superstition in avoiding superstition when men think they do best if they go farthest from the superstition formerly received, therefore care should be had that the good be not taken away with the bad, which commonly is done when the people is the reformer."—Bacon's essay on "Superstition."

² "There is, if I mistake not, no department of literature the importance of which is more inadequately realised than the lives of the saints. Even where they have no historical value, they have moral value of the very highest order."—Lecky's "European Morals." Vol. II.

miring interest comparatively withheld from those subsequent Christian saints whose lives and example, materially aided to establish Christianity in the civilised world.

CHAPTER XII.

THROUGHOUT Europe Christianity has acquired so firm a hold that the scepticism of able, attractive writers like Voltaire, Hume and Gibbon, on the whole, failed to weaken it among many of their most eminent readers and admirers. They published their doubts and insinuations in times of comparative ignorance, fanaticism, and legal severity.¹ They probably thought that in a more enlightened future their works would receive not only more

¹ "Voltaire was the very eye of eighteenth century illumination. It was he who conveyed to his generation, in a multitude of forms, the consciousness at once of the power and the rights of human intelligence. Wrong-doing and injustice were not simple words on his lips; they went as knives to the heart; he suffered with the victim, and consumed with an active rage against the oppressor."—Morley's "Voltaire," pp. 5-13.

attention but more credence than in their own times. But the comparative freedom, enlightenment and political security, which have ensued since their day, have brought their thoughts before different examiners from those they probably expected. Their works are, indeed, read and admired by far more educated, and therefore more appreciative, critics than they themselves ever knew. Yet, apparently, those parts of their works which they chiefly relied on as their highest proofs of ability are now considered in a different light. The histories of Hume and Gibbon are, indeed, republished, but often with their sneering, sceptical remarks contradicted, omitted, or apologised for in notes and prefaces. Even Voltaire's vast, unscrupulous powers of sarcasm are now thought by some eminent men to be often unworthily

employed.¹ In fact, the writings of these three illustrious men are now examined, admired and distrusted, by many readers, who disapprove of or are uninfluenced by their religious views and insinuations. Belief in Christianity has in most studious minds repelled their doubts and attacks, yet no longer in a spirit of persecuting indignation or unreasoning prejudice, but in one of calm, historic reflection, founded on increased knowledge of the religions of the world. This enlightening influence enables a highly educated posterity to view these writers in a spirit equally free from the admiration of frivolous sceptics or the prejudices of bigoted theologians. The political history of the world has since their time, evidently, had great effect on men's views of Christianity. Its brief overthrow

¹ See Macaulay's remarks on Voltaire, "Essays on Frederick the Great" and on Ranke's "History of the Popes."

and speedy restoration in France, its political extension and confirmation in almost every part of the world, the weakness or decline of every opposing religious system, have caused the European intellect to examine it with renewed and, if possible, increased attention. In this inquiry, Germany, England and France, take the lead. Although no revelations come from Judea, despite its being more and more explored by Christian travellers and theologians, yet the wonderful discoveries of Messrs Layard, Schliemann, Maspero, and others, in Assyria, Asia Minor and Egypt, have in this century greatly re-directed European attention from the new world to the old. Yet in the former's discovery European power was alone devoted to its conquest and colonisation. Neither Asiatics or Africans aided in its acquisition, except, indeed, the involuntary

assistance furnished by African slaves, imported by nominal Christians. Throughout the vast American continent Europeans alone prevail in victorious invasion and permanent religious conversion. This extensive, rich, unknown region, however, furnishes neither religious nor historical information of any value. From Europe the ruling descendants of former colonists derive all religious and historical knowledge, while its native races gradually disappear under Christian political and social supremacy. Yet the European races, despite their partial absorption into a new world, prevail more and more over the declining strength of Asiatic and African Mohammedans and heathens. Russia, England and France, despite national jealousies, alike prevail against Mohammedanism, and every sort of heathenism attempting to oppose their political progress. The result is that, since the complete triumph of Chris-

tianity throughout the new world, all the scenes of ancient history in the old are rendered more accessible than ever to Christian residents or travellers. It is one of the many glories of this century, especially its latter part, to revive and increase European interest and knowledge about the most ancient cities and countries of the world. Nineveh, Troy and Egypt, in historical and antiquarian revelations, alike reward their energetic European explorers. No longer opposed or endangered by native races, learned Europeans, guided, encouraged and enlightened, by classic works, which they alone have preserved, pursue their researches in those cities and countries which thousands of years ago these works celebrated or described. The accuracy with which their discoveries confirm the partly distrusted truths of ancient history may tend to confirm Christianity in some inquiring minds. When

even the historic statements of Herodotus, presumptuously called the "Father of Lies" by some writers, are often confirmed by modern scholars and travellers, it is natural that subsequent Christian history should receive all the more calm attention, free from either fanatical advocacy or frivolous opposition, which were formerly freely devoted to it.¹ What must, however, impress thoughtful historical students is the undeniable fact, that despite the most wonderful achievements imaginable, and even unimaginable, by the human intellect; despite the immense increase of general knowledge, and the amazing discoveries of geologists, travellers and scholars, yet no new light, no further information, seem obtainable about mankind's religion. That subject remains as concealed as ever from

¹ See Rawlinson's Preface to his translation of "Herodotus." Also Ranke's "Universal History."

human knowledge, while the votaries of the most ancient and modern religions, Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, discover nothing to add to the old or new Testaments or to the Koran. As the old and new worlds are brought more and more in contact by the many inventions of this wonderful century, the stationary position of religious knowledge in both appears the more remarkable. In every other department of thought, discovery and elucidation, the triumphs of the human intellect seem increasing and extending. Religious history alone remains unchanged, and apparently unchangeable, by any efforts or progress of mankind. Though of all surviving faiths the Christian has been the most divided and sub-divided, yet its main doctrines, as well as history, like those of Judaism and Mohammedanism, remain uninfluenced or unaffected by the progress and changes

of time. While some thoughtful minds, in all three religions, may distrust their respective faiths, no sceptical objections have hitherto avowedly extinguished them in any country. They remain firmly established in the hearts of millions, unrivalled by any newer system of religious belief. The popular expression of the spirit of the age—never so enlightened in every department of knowledge as in this century—doubtless, causes more humane constructions about religious doctrine, as proved by men's conduct, sentiments, policy, and legislation; and evidently it has a decided tendency to make people more just, tolerant and merciful than ever towards the votaries of different religions. But respecting all knowledge of the moral relations between the Creator and mankind, either in this or in a future world, the teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, re-

main the sole instructors of the most learned minds, even in this age of unprecedented historical revelation and scientific discovery.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the world of birds, animals and plants, alike believed to be God's sole creations, the trace or influence of an evil spirit is manifest, and often successful. For instance, it is a frequent saying among devout men, on a beautiful day, when birds, animals and plants, seem alike in health, thriving, and enjoying life, that then the goodness of their Creator is specially apparent in His works; yet all this felicity is liable to complete changes arising from natural causes.¹ A pes-

¹ "A single hurricane destroys the hopes of a season; a flight of locusts or an inundation desolates a district. Everything, in short, which the worst men commit, either against life or property, is perpetrated on a larger scale by natural agents."—J. S. Mill's "Essays on Religion," p. 30.

tilence, seasons of extreme cold, heat, wet, or dryness, a destructive storm, or withering blight, sometimes utterly destroy or greatly diminish all previous happiness, health or prosperity, in existing creations. The Creator is then often said to frown upon the earth. Yet in this imaginary displeasure creatures incapable of offending Him in any way are exposed or subjected to as much misery and suffering as if they were responsible human beings. Dr Paley,¹ in common with most Christian writers before and since his time, believes that throughout all creation the signs of Divine unity are evident. Others may think, however, as Mr John Stuart Mill seems to infer, that those of duality in the creating power are yet more probable, judging from the frequent checks, misfortunes and interruptions, to which all existence, human,

¹ "Natural Theology and Evidences of Christianity."

animal and vegetable, is exposed even by natural laws.¹

Thus traces of an evil or hostile spirit are as apparent throughout nature's works as those of a benevolent one. Not only are health and life among mankind, animals, plants, etc., always endangered, and often destroyed, by infectious diseases and accidents, but all human, animal and insect, life is perpetually exposed to the unaccountable hatreds which members of the same as well as of different races often evince against each

¹ "I know not how we can even satisfy ourselves on grounds of natural theology that the Creator foresees all the future, that He foreknows all the effects that will issue from His own contrivances. There may be great wisdom without the power of foreseeing and calculating everything, and human workmanship teaches us the possibility that the workman's knowledge of the properties of the things he works on may enable him to make arrangements admirably fitted to produce a given result, while he may have very little power of foreseeing the agencies of another kind which may modify or counteract the operation of the machinery he has made."
—J. S. Mill's "Essays on Religion," p. 182.

other. While national, religious and social, enmities have in human history more or less afflicted mankind wherever the race existed, in the animal kingdom not only wild beasts, noxious insects and birds of prey, naturally destroy each other, to prolong or defend their own existence, but the causeless hatred which comparatively harmless birds and animals feel against one another is known to all lovers of natural history.¹

The principle of life destroying life is as well known to gardeners, planters, florists or horticulturists, as to preservers of birds and animals. If trees or shrubs,

¹ "If there are any marks at all of special design in creation, one of the things most evidently designed is that a large proportion of all animals should pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals. They have been lavishly fitted out with the instruments necessary for that purpose; and many of them seem to have been constructed incapable of supporting themselves by any other food."—Mill's "Essays on Religion," p. 58.

especially of different kinds, grow close together, one will probably destroy the other, or perhaps both perish in a silent conflict not less fatal than the fierce, noisy contests among the human animal, bird and insect creations.¹ Antipathy to or wish to destroy life, often without any apparent object, actuates many though not all birds and animals when brought into collision. Among the carnivorous, the desire to kill arises from natural causes rendering their own lives dependent upon the deaths of others; but in other cases birds, animals and insects, often destroy each other with-

¹ "The structure of every organic being is related in the most essential, yet often hidden, manner to that of all other organic beings with which it comes into competition for food or residence, or from which it has to escape, or on which it preys. When we reflect on this struggle we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy and the happy, survive and multiply."—Darwin's "Origin of Species." Ch. iii.

out any apparent cause, as if from secret enmity, which no language on their part can explain. Besides many if not general instances of mutual hatred among the human and animal creations, the silent antagonism of trees, plants, etc., towards each other is equally fatal and intense, though unaccompanied by any sign of external emotion. On the other hand, the influence of a benevolent or life-preserving spirit appears in the natural care and love of nearly all mankind, birds and animals, for their young ones when in a helpless condition. Their self-denial and bravery in the nurture, defence and preservation, of offspring are proved by their devoted eagerness to guard the health and protect the lives of their successors. In the case of the vegetable, as well as those of the human and animal creations, the unseen good and evil influences of apparent

natural causes produce directly opposite results. A favourable soil, climate and weather, alike promote growth, beauty and strength, but a sudden yet natural change may at any time destroy everything.

As if by some invisible destructive hand, life generally, throughout all creation, and apparently flourishing under the favouring influences of nature, is sometimes suddenly, sometimes gradually destroyed by evil influences, which to human knowledge are as mysterious and unaccountable as those which aided, cherished or produced, the natural vitality.¹ In this amazing

¹ "Whatsoever in nature gives indication of beneficent design, proves this beneficence to be armed only with limited power, and the duty of man is to co-operate with the beneficent powers, not by imitating, but by perpetually striving to amend the course of nature, and bringing that part of it over which we can exercise control more nearly in conformity with a high standard of justice and goodness."—*Mill's Essays on Religion*," p. 65.

spectacle of life and death, health and sickness, love and hate, pain and pleasure, which distinguish all existing creations, the unseen influences of superior powers, friendly or hostile to life, always seem evident to most thoughtful minds. Unity, however, in the creating power has to most men appeared more likely than duality, even in such a varying scene of uncertain, inexplicable conflict between opposing principles tending respectively to the preservation or extinction of worldly existence. Amid this perpetual strife mankind holds a mortal position, which, despite real or supposed advantages, much resembles those of all other living creations.¹

¹ "The glory of man flourishes in the flesh like grass, and that which is thought to be sublime is small as an herb, premature as a flower, perishable as grass. To-day thou mayst see the youth strong, advancing to manhood, flourishing in the bloom of his age, of comely presence, of sweet

In human history, like those of birds and animals, there are similar proofs of health and sickness, happiness and misery, kindness and cruelty. Diseases and misfortunes, arising both from known and unknown causes, occasionally assail them alike. Events called accidents, sometimes alike unforeseen and unaccountable, happen to them all. The one grand, undeniable distinction between the human and all other living creations is the general if not universal idea, preserved by the former alone, of some Deity or unseen Power, usually

complexion; to-morrow he meets you changed in face and aspect, and he who the day before seemed to thee noble by reason of his becoming beauty, on another day seems an object of pity, being reduced by the infirmity of some sickness. Of the same nature, therefore, is the glory of man or the flower of the grass which, when it is lost, vanishes, abandoning the entire scene of man, both that which it overshadowed from above and that which it animated within."—St Ambrose, "Extracts from the Fathers."

believed to reward or punish responsible men in this world or in the next—some times in both.¹

Some savage human races, indeed, seem nearly if not quite destitute of the most vague religious belief; but as a very general rule most tribes and societies of men, from the earliest times, imagined and usually feared an invisible Deity, with feelings somewhat resembling their terror of human enemies or of savage animals.² Yet in most human minds the dreaded wrath of the Deity has been thought to be mitigated or escaped

¹ "The question whether there exists a Creator and Ruler of the Universe has been answered in the affirmative by some of the highest intellects that have ever existed."—Darwin's "*Descent of Man*." Part I. ch. iii.

² "There is no evidence that man was aboriginally endowed with the ennobling belief in the existence of an omnipotent God. There is ample evidence that numerous races have existed, and still exist, who have no idea of one or more gods, and who have no words in their languages to express such an idea."—Darwin's "*Descent of Man*," Part I. ch. ii.

by some course of action or of mental belief. This consolatory idea has pervaded all communities of believers, civilised and uncivilised. Few if any despair of their own salvation as a community, though in rare instances individuals have despaired of their own through mental remorse and consciousness of personal crime.¹ Yet some communities of men, even in civilised history, have denied all chance of it for countless millions of their fellow men. In this view religious believers of almost all descriptions have come to the same conclusion, though arriving at it by very different means. Thus that a majority of mankind will perish everlastingly is the doctrine still believed in by many religious men, even among Christians. This word "perish," however, seems differently con-

¹ See Darwin on the influences of remorse, "Descent of Man." Part I. ch. ii.

strued by some theologians from its usual meaning. The word, applied to living things on earth, undoubtedly means, with cessation of life on it, the simultaneous cessation of all feeling or sensation for ever. Not so, according to many theologians, respecting mankind. The condemned majority are by no means supposed to be going where sensation ends with human existence. On the contrary, they are supposed to be revived after leaving this world, to be reclothed in flesh, and then to have torturing agencies applied to bodies which are only restored for the sake of their suffering from them. These tortures, and the capacity for suffering them, are alike supposed to be the sole inventions of an all-merciful, all-powerful, and all-wise Maker. That the Creator has *disowned* His human compositions is the result at which Newman has

apparently arrived,¹ yet this opinion involves also belief in God's utter disappointment and surprise at the unexpected, unforeseen wickedness of beings created by Himself. The word "disown" implies that at one period of human history the Almighty may have had a better opinion of mankind than what a longer experience has produced on its own Creator's mind. This belief is surely incompatible with either His omnipotence or omniscience, while the fact of His continuing to create men *after* disowning them, and, therefore, knowing that an immense majority are going to eternal misery, is equally incompatible with Divine mercy. If we examine the records of history as far as it can be ascertained by geologists, historians, lin-

¹ "Either there is no Creator or He has disowned His creatures," adding that his conscience convinces him that our iniquities have divided between us and our God. Thus it solves the world's mystery," etc.—"Grammar of Assent," p. 392.

guists and geographers, the knowledge is forced upon us that human creation was proceeding for centuries throughout parts of the world where no religious belief had the least chance of being known at all; yet a long subsequent posterity confidently doomed their previous, contemporary and succeeding, fellow men to the Creator's future wrath because He did not give them the means of believing in Him as they did. The fact is that the history of the world, in its fresh supplies of men, animals, birds, plants, etc., has been carried on for centuries before any religious system was known anywhere. Even when religions were developed into different systems, their votaries were usually as convinced of the Creator's implacable anger against each other as they were of His previous anger towards all who had lived in inevitable ignorance. It is truly astonishing to find in the pages of

religious history how some men of high character, intellect and education, have thus believed the Maker to show less justice or mercy than has been historically shown by wise kings, ministers, or even by humane, sensible employers. The supremely good Creator was actually endowed with the feelings, sentiments and policy, of a mere relentless conqueror, general, or triumphant party leader.¹ He was thought kind and beneficent to obedient subjects or followers, but either as cruel, implacable, or utterly uninterested, respecting the sufferings of erroneous believers. In accordance with this view of mankind's Creator many votaries of successive religions have naturally adopted a

¹ "The recognition of the object of the highest worship in a being who could make a hell, and who could create countless generations of human beings with certain foreknowledge that He was creating them for this fate—Is there any moral enormity which might not be justified by imitation of such a Deity?"—Mill's "Essays on Religion," p. 114.

similar belief in their exclusive favour by Him. He has thus been supposed utterly disappointed and offended by His own human creations, and to entrust their eternal punishment to the malignity of an evil spirit previously vanquished by His own supreme omnipotence.¹ Thus we find Milton and Dante—Catholic and Protestant—intimate very similar ideas of the Creator's future feelings and intentions towards mankind. These ideas were proclaimed by their predecessors, contemporaries and successors, often learned, excellent men, as well as ignorant zealots, to believing multitudes, and

¹ In "Paradise Lost" (Book III.) the Creator predicts to Jesus the fall of man into the devil's power :—

"For man will hearken to his glozing lies,
And easily transgress the sole command;
Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall
He and his faithless progeny:
Whose fault?
Whose but his own."

Despite Milton's splendid language, the idea of the Creator appealing to Jesus, while blaming His own creation for its

their effect was to perpetuate intolerant ideas causing persecuting legislation throughout many centuries of Christian history.

Such, in fact, seems, from historical evidence, to have been the religious belief for centuries, maintained and still existing in even some enlightened and religious minds among Christians and Mohammedans. Undoubtedly some among them reject, and probably always have rejected or greatly modified these ideas. But their general principles, involving the surrender or abandonment of a vast human majority by their disappointed yet all-powerful and all-merci-

frailty, seems utterly incompatible with either of His three attributes of mercy, justice, and power. Yet Dean Stanley remarks on Milton's influence on British religious history: "Of all our brilliant English divines of the seventeenth century there is no one who can be fairly said to have exercised so much influence over the popular theology of this nation as has been undoubtedly exercised by a half heretic, half Puritan layman—the author of "Paradise Lost." —Preface to "Eastern Church."

ful Creator to the torturing power of His defeated foe, seem to have been always believed in by many if not by most among these religious denominations.¹

¹ "What strikes the mind so forcibly is God's absence from His own world. It is as if others had got possession of His work." "Not only is the Creator far off, but some being of malignant nature seems to have got hold of us, and to be making us his sport." "The great mystery is not that evil has no end, but that it had a beginning."—Newman's "Grammar of Assent," pp. 393 and 417. This eminent theologian concludes: "But I submit the whole subject to the theological school," pp. 391 and 417.

CHAPTER XIV.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many able, learned and zealous, discussions upon religious subjects in Britain during and since the Reformation, ecclesiastical history has evidently been much neglected. Newman, writing in 1846, declares that the only ecclesiastical historian was the writer whom he calls the "Infidel" Gibbon.¹ Dean Stanley, writing in 1864, says that since Newman wrote Dean Milman's works have removed "this reproach"² while he himself thinks Gibbon's history is

¹ See Introduction to "Development of Christianity."

² Introduction to "Eastern Church."

practically that of the rise and progress of the Christian Church. The "Decline and Fall," however, says little about any religions except the Roman paganism, Judaism, Parseeism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. The religious faiths of Buddha, Confucius, and of the African and American races, are scarcely mentioned. Yet Gibbon's great work has indeed furnished immense instruction about the histories of the religions he describes. The extinguished paganism, the persecuted yet surviving Judaism, and its triumphant successors, Christianity and Mohammedanism, he alike describes with a learning, research and vigorous power, scarcely equalled by any other historian. Yet Gibbon's own feelings, which make him regret the fall of paganism, sneer at both Jews and Christians, and greatly admire Mohammedanism, were little shared either by thoughtful contemporaries or a more

learned posterity. Thus while his opinions were generally blamed by religious contemporaries, and even by subsequent poets,¹ this present century has seen them studied by learned Christian theologians and historians like Newman, Macaulay, Milman and Stanley; without their being attracted by his views on religious subjects. Since his time all literature, at least in Europe, has been mostly confined to Christians or to Jews. Mohammedans hitherto, except in Constantinople or in India, take little part in literary study, thought or discussion.² Among them, were it

¹ See Byron's "Childe Harold."

² "These two rival religions have at last found in India a common arena and audience for polemical controversy. The Englishman in India is an Arabic scholar, and the Indian Mohammedan studies English works. Sir William Muir writes a 'Life of Mohammed,' and he has at once found a gainsayer in Syud Ahmed Khan Bahadur, a distinguished officer of the government over which Sir William lately presided. . . . Instead of bigoted contempt and invective, we have now a fair literary argument."—Lyall's "Asiatic Studies," Ch. ix.

more known, Gibbon's work, at least its views about Mohammed, would probably be read with more pleasure than those of Sir W. Muir. For generally when Mohammed is mentioned the historian praises him with the interest of an admiring biographer.¹

The heroic warrior-prophet replacing the cruel idolatry of his country by a comparatively pure monotheism, while courting the friendship of Jews and Christians, till rejected by both, evidently inspires Gibbon with an admiration previously

¹ A similar admiration of Mohammed has been yet more strongly expressed by Mr Carlyle. "This deep-hearted son of the wilderness, with his beaming black eyes and open, social, deep soul, had other thoughts in him than ambition. He was one of those who cannot but be in earnest—whom Nature herself has appointed to be sincere. . . . The word of such a man is a voice direct from Nature's own heart. Ambition? What could all Arabiado for this man? It was not of the earth he wanted to hear. It was of the heaven above, and of the hell beneath."—"Heroes and Hero Worship. Lec. ii."

unexpressed except by Mohammedans. The rise of Christianity, however, seems to him more a cause for sarcastic regret and depreciation than interest or admiration. His history, therefore, describes Christianity almost like the triumph of a fanatical religious system over a harmless and attractive pagan mythology, while Mohammed's triumph was over a degrading idolatry. The character of Jesus Himself is very slightly glanced at in Gibbon's history. When mentioned, it is with respect but no interest, while the sins and follies of His believers are brought into as much prominence as possible, and exposed with the keenest irony and studied sarcasm. The reception of Gibbon's history in the Christian world was practically rather a triumph of the Christian faith. Its learning, instruction and vast information, were generally admired and valued, while its views on Christianity were usually disregarded even by

some deists and free-thinkers. His "solemn sneers," like Voltaire's constant mockery, are no longer dreaded by the friends or much adopted by the foes of Christianity. In fact, since his time religious discussion is pursued and religious inquiry promoted in a very different spirit from what was known before in the world of literary thought.¹ A spirit of calm, truth-seeking inquiry now prevails in religious research and discussion which, unfortunately for human nature, was seldom known or manifested, at any previous period of theological history. During this

¹ "Antagonism to religious beliefs habitually leads to entire rejection of them. The truth, recognisable only after antagonism has spent itself, is that the wrong beliefs rejected are superficial, and that a right belief hidden by them remains when they have been rejected. Those who defend, equally with those who assail religious creeds, suppose that everything turns on the maintenance of the particular dogmas at issue; whereas the dogmas are but temporary forms of that which is permanent."—Herbert Spencer's "Sociology." Ch. xii.

century more works on the life of Christ, beside more essays and treatises on Christianity, have appeared than, perhaps, ever before. Most of them are written with far more learning, calmness and fair reasoning, than were hitherto devoted to the subject. Milman, Stanley, Newman and Farrar, in England, and Strauss, Max Müller and Renan, in France and Germany, have all published their thoughts to an educated Christian world. These writers, owing to the vast increase of general knowledge, and the rapid development of intellectual research, possess great advantages over literary predecessors in the same field of inquiry.

Thus Neander, Voltaire, Bishop Butler, Paley, Gibbon, Hume, Paine, etc., beside other English and foreign writers who have hitherto supported or attacked Christianity, are alike far surpassed in general knowledge,

if not in original talent, by the writers of this century.

In comparing the opposition to Christianity during ancient, mediæval and modern times, it appears that at no period was it ever enthusiastic nor did it appeal much to popular support. Christianity's first foe, the incredulous Judaism, preserved to this day, was usually calm, defensive, and restricted to one nation, which never cared to make proselytes. The opposition of Roman paganism arose either from the political suspicions of unpopular rulers like Nero and Domitian, or from the philosophic distrust of such rare, exceptional characters as those of Julian and Marcus Aurelius. Very few, however, among their subjects and co-religionists shared their opinions, or perhaps quite understood them. They inspired no enthusiasm, and aroused no ardour, eloquence or self-sacrificing devotion, in behalf of the vanishing ancient faith.

The mass of the pagan population, when Christianity was fairly explained, eagerly preferred it to their distrusted, fanciful mythology, which never revived. Many centuries later, the rejection of Christianity by some French and comparatively few English sceptics was likewise confined to a minority, politically ascendant for a short time in France, but never in England. In neither country, however, was popular enthusiasm ever aroused against Christianity. Its assailants were a few calm philosophers, or sneering, worldly sceptics, or tyrannical revolutionists, who condemned it in France, partly owing to its chance association with an overthrown monarchy. But its condemnation was never supported, even in France, by public opinion generally, nor by any popular enthusiasm. When Christianity was restored, after a brief period of avowed, despotic atheism, the supporters of the latter were in

a minority as before, while nearly all the ardour and enthusiasm of the country were on the side of the re-established Catholic version of Christianity. In England, avowed scepticism was always confined to a few isolated thinkers, both of estimable and of worthless character, but who never influenced, far less ruled, public opinion in any question of importance. The only real enthusiasm, eager, ardent and proselytising, that resisted Christianity was Mohammedanism. But it must be remembered that it is itself a species or version of Christianity,¹ Mohammedans have always evinced a reverence for Jesus unknown to either Jews, Pagans, Buddhists or Parsees. Indeed, during the few centuries elapsing between the rise of Christianity and that of Mohammedanism, it is evident that believers in the latter must

¹ See B. Smith's "Mohammed," also Lyall's "Asiatic Studies."

view Christianity as the only true faith till their later revelation superseded it in doctrinal importance, without depriving it either of historic truth or religious veneration.¹

¹ "Jesus was a mere mortal, and at the day of judgment His testimony will serve to condemn both the Jews, who reject Him as a prophet, and the Christians, who adore Him as the Son of God. The malice of his enemies aspersed His reputation, and conspired against His life; but their intention only was guilty—a phantom or a criminal was substituted on the Cross, and the innocent saint was translated to heaven. During six hundred years the gospel was the way of truth and salvation, but the Christians insensibly forgot both the laws and the example of their Founder, and Mohammed was instructed to accuse the Church, as well as the synagogue, of corrupting the integrity of the sacred text."—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Ch. I.

CHAPTER XV.

THE triumph and extension of Christian political power are now greater than ever. No non-Christian government is really formidable, at least to Christian nations. The triumph of Christianity would, therefore, seem approaching completion but for the remarkable distrust of some of its doctrines, arising, and perhaps increasing, in its most civilised strongholds the chief cities of Europe. It is remarkable that anti-Christian views of the present day are differently founded from those of the last century, or the beginning of the present one.¹ They seem inde-

¹ "The war against religious beliefs in the last century was carried on principally on the ground of common sense, or of

pendent of the doubts, reasonings and insinuations, of Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon or Paine. As the latter, however, have on the whole failed to convince or convert the European intellect, and are now scarcely relied on even by the sceptical, it seems not unlikely that the new reasonings against religious belief may share the fate of their predecessors. They will doubtless convince some learned, thoughtful minds, yet hitherto they have achieved no decisive or acknowledged success by the public abolition of religious faith in any civilised country. According to historical preced-

logic; in the present age, on the ground of science. . . . Religions tend to be discussed, at least by those who reject them, less as intrinsically true or false than as products thrown up by certain states of civilisation, and which, like the animal and vegetable productions of a geological period, perish in those which succeed it from the cessation of the conditions necessary for their continued existence."—Mill's "Essays on Religion," p. 126. See also Professor Huxley's "Science and Culture." Ch. xii.

ent, it seems probable that some learned men may entertain, and apparently justify on philosophic grounds, almost any degree of scepticism or utter disbelief in religion. But, unless man's history and nature are completely changed from historical or traditional antecedents, the hold of religion on the human intellect generally will remain practically unchanged by the endless variety of doubts, insinuations and denials, proclaimed by a learned but isolated minority. Two of the most religious writers of the day—Cardinal Newman and Dr Farrar—alike acknowledge these new doubts and criticisms, which seem increasing both on the Continent and in London.¹ Among able living writers on Christian history, M. Renan is one of the most conspicuous and popular. His works, though written in French, are promptly translated into English, and have had im-

¹ "Development of Christianity" and "Life of Christ."

mense circulation. Unlike his great French literary predecessor Voltaire, Renan seldom if ever writes sarcastically. The remarkable contrast between these great French writers, in their treatment of Christianity, to some extent illustrates the difference between the scepticism of the last century and the free-thinking of the present. Both these men have had immense influence, arising through their writings alone, over the European intellect. Both were equally undeterred by any personal fear from giving their thoughts to the world through the medium of literature. Both were born and educated Catholic Frenchmen, and their works alike condemned, in the one case, and censured, in the other, by the clergy of their own country. But while Voltaire was denounced as an impious foe to all religion by many worthy divines, Renan's works were censured with comparative mildness.

This difference of treatment, though partly owing to the exasperating sarcasm of Voltaire and the calm, gentle reasoning of Renan, is still more due to the difference of the times in which they wrote. The works of both have probably neither been as successful nor as unsuccessful as desired by opponents or partisans. The spirit of these writers, as well as their principles, while presenting many points of resemblance, is yet very different. Renan's admiration, for instance, of the excellent St Francis D'Assis,¹ is almost incompatible with the spirit of Voltaire. Renan seldom or never sneers at anybody or anything. He calmly doubts, examines and explains, according to his evident convictions. His learning, research, and interesting style are perhaps more remarkable than his talents. But his works, especially on Christian history, were in

¹ "Studies in Religious History."

a literary sense wonderfully successful, and his "Life of Jesus" has passed through twelve or thirteen editions. Its views have encountered more incredulity and calm criticism from opponents than vehement indignation. For the first time, perhaps, in history such a work was written avowedly in a sceptical spirit in some respects, yet so free from sarcasm or vehemence that it aroused very slight irritation even among those who thought it frivolous or erroneous. Dr Farrar's work on the same subject appeared some years after those of Strauss and Renan. While earnestly defending Christianity, Farrar, like Renan, is very conciliatory in his expressions towards all opponents. In this respect Renan's mildness towards the Romish Church, which could not do otherwise than condemn his works, is very different from the usual style of sceptical writers, as he evidently regards it with the

affection of early association.¹ Farrar's mild allusion to Jews and sceptics are worthy of earnest attention. Such language on such subjects, used by orthodox and sceptical writers in common, was almost unknown in religious history till this century—a period, indeed, unrivalled in perfect freedom of mental thought and expression. For of all imaginable subjects of general importance or interest none has hitherto aroused such anger or excitement as doubts or discussions even respecting minute details of religious belief. It is, therefore, a remarkable sign of the

¹ Despite the utter condemnation of his views on Christianity by Roman Catholics, Renan gently writes: "Ties of childhood—the closest of all ties—bind me to Catholicism, and I am often tempted to say of it what Job said, '*Etiam si occiderit me in ipso sperabo.*'"—Hibbert Lectures. Dr Farrar, with somewhat similar mildness or self-control, thus notices those whom he terms "honest doubters" of Christianity: "I hope to use no single word of anger or denunciation against a scepticism which I know to be, in many cases, perfectly honest and self-sacrificingly noble."—Preface to the "Life of Christ."

change in men's minds, when Christianity is now examined, maintained or doubted, without either anger, excitement or legalised cruelty, with which nearly all religious differences even in Christian history have been hitherto associated. Men of all known religions, and of no religion, now mingle in worldly intercourse with a freedom not only from persecution but from prejudice hitherto unknown. Opinions the most contradictory, and speculations the most daring, about religion are now uttered or diffused without the former danger of either legal penalty or social degradation.

Throughout the vast British empire every known religion, as well as utter atheism, can be safely professed without risk to personal safety or loss of legal rights. Yet while such complete mental freedom prevails throughout a great part of Europe and America, it is remarkable that no public

denial of Christianity, no replacement of it by a newer religion, has been made by any country.¹ The French, or rather the Paris, republicans of the last century for a short time attempted to publicly repudiate all religious belief; but their infidel government was soon replaced by their former Christian denomination, proving that atheism never truly expressed the opinions of the French nation.² During this century Christianity has, perhaps, been more questioned, doubted and examined, by learned men within its doctrinal limits than

¹ "History warns us, however, that it is the customary fate of new truths to begin as heresies and to end as superstitions. . . . A theory is a species of thinking, and its right to exist is co-extensive with its power of resisting extinction by its rivals."—Huxley's "Science and Culture." Lec. xii.

² "France is the country where reactions are most rapid and violent. Nowhere else can the reformer count so surely on seeing the completion of his reform followed so instantly by the triumph of its adversaries."—Morley's "Voltaire," p. 225.

ever before.¹ Year by year more and more freedom of thought accompanies all reasoning upon it. Judea, the scene of its first revelation, is now thrown completely open to the religious and patriotic visits of Jewish and Christian travellers. It is now alike accessible to the inquiries of theologians the researches of scholars and the curiosity of antiquaries. The scattered Jews from different countries visit this most interesting of all lands, strictly preserving the doctrines of the old Testament, while rejecting its two supplements, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Neither Buddhism nor Mohammedanism have for many years made conquests in the old World, while America and Australia are almost unknown to both. The triumph of Christianity, therefore, seems not much either opposed or delayed by the remarkable revolt against some of its doc-

¹ See Newman's "Development of Christian Doctrine."

trines, which seems increasing in countries where it has been longest established. Yet despite the influence, learning and popularity, of many deistical and free-thinking writers or preachers, they have not hitherto avowedly converted a majority in any Christian country. Such eminent thinkers have as yet been admired by learned minorities; but, when they disappear, Christianity, often indeed greatly influenced by their spirit, is yet steadily maintained by a vast majority without any acknowledged change. Throughout America and Australia, perhaps fated to take a more prominent part in the world's history, no other religion has taken root. In the former, the ancient faiths have disappeared before Christianity, which in different forms was imported from Europe and established by European settlers. British, Spanish, French and German, colonists pre-

served their separate denominations derived from ancestral countries, which no discovery or revelation in their new habitations in any way alter. Thus Asia still remains the birthplace of the world's religions. Those of America and Australia, like those of ancient Europe and modern Africa, disappear more and more before the advance of Christianity, and in the latter before the advance of Mohammedanism. These two religions are now unequalled in military, intellectual and political power, yet there is no longer rivalry between them. The former is everywhere progressing, the latter stationary or declining, except in India and Africa, where its successes, however, are only over Brahminists, Buddhists and heathens.¹ Wherever Christianity encounters warlike or political opposition, it prevails over both.

In Asia and Africa, Russian, English and

¹ Lyall's "Asiatic Studies."

French Christians actually impede each other's progress through national jealousies, supporting Mohammedanism politically against the triumph of their common faith. While this spectacle is presented in foreign lands, the most ancient of all religions, Judaism, though in political subjection everywhere, still flourishes, and apparently increases in intellectual and social importance throughout most civilised countries. It is, perhaps, possible that deism, apparently spreading through parts of Christian Europe, and revealing itself in many able British and foreign writers of this century, may be directly or indirectly encouraged by Jewish influence or intercourse. Dr Farrar declares that some modern Jews, without professing Christianity, differ from their ancestors' opinion of Jesus, and believe Him the greatest prophet of their race.¹ If this statement be true, the resem-

¹ Preface to "Life of Christ."

blance of that opinion to those of many modern deists is sufficiently evident. Yet this approximation, if it may be so called, is chiefly perceptible in civilised European cities. In these abodes of industry, wealth, learning and intellectual progress, Judaism and its Christian successors are now free from persecution, suspicion, prejudice or legal oppression. It may be possible that Jesus, hitherto a hopeless barrier between them, is gradually becoming a cause of reconciliation instead of hereditary enmity. It certainly seems that while some professed Christians doubt Christ's divinity, some professed Jews have abandoned their hereditary dislike to Him, and no longer justify His execution. Whether these mutual concessions, which, whether intentional or not, they practically are, will ever cause a more complete agreement between Jews and Christians, time alone can tell. But, judging from recent British and

foreign literature, as well as from legislative, political, and commercial history, such an event seems, at least, more likely than at any former period.¹

¹ "Though the Jew cannot make converts, though he does not wish it—for his business is to keep the Family of Abraham distinct from all others—he can do much to shake the faith of those among whom he dwells. In all times, of late years more especially, he has been able to adapt himself to prevailing habits of thought and feeling."—Professor Maurice's "Religions of the World." Lec. i.

CHAPTER XVI.

IMPARTIALITY, calm and judicious, free alike from frivolity, political prejudice or religious bigotry, now chiefly animates public opinion in civilised Europe.¹ This seems the natural result of that vast increase of human intercourse and acquaintance between different nations which is among the many advantages of this century. Yet it cannot be denied that

¹ "Amongst all civilised nations a nearly uniform standard of morality is recognised: the same books on ethical subjects are consulted for the guidance of life. . . . The great controversies between the Christian sects either turn upon questions which have no direct bearing upon human conduct or upon forms of Church government and discipline. They rarely turn upon the moral doctrines which are involved in Christianity. Upon this there is a prevailing tendency to approximation and agreement."—Sir G. C. Lewis's "Influence of Authority." Ch. iv.

some able historians have, even recently, shown an amount of party spirit, and perhaps unconscious unfairness, to which men of inferior ability are often superior. Modern history proves that personal intercourse with or knowledge of political or religious opponents usually make men more tolerant and, therefore, more just and enlightened than any amount of talent or learning can effect, when accompanied either by solitude or exclusive intercourse with religious or political partisans.¹

¹ "While an intense sectarian spirit is compatible with the most transcendent abilities and with the most profound learning, provided those abilities and that learning are directed in a single channel, it can very rarely survive close contact with members of different creeds. When men have once realised the truth that no single sect possesses a monopoly of either virtue or of abilities; when, above all, they have begun to revere and love, for their moral qualities, those from whom they are separated by their creeds, belief in the certainty and the importance of their distinctive tenets will usually be impaired, and their intolerance towards others proportionately diminished." — Lecky's "Rationalism." Vol. II.

Thus the results even of the highest education are sometimes in this respect disappointing among religious and political historians. Writers who are accomplished, well read and studious, are sometimes, perhaps unconsciously, unable or unwilling to be fair towards opponents. The precious maxim *Audi alteram partem* is often practically disregarded even by some well-educated and able writers. For instance, it can scarcely be maintained that either Macaulay, Carlyle or Newman, three of the most highly educated British writers of the century, are scrupulously fair towards men or opinions differing from their own. It is evident that some men, though far inferior in every mental gift, but who constantly mingle with religious or political opponents, are practically more fair and just than any of them. For no matter how able, sincere or learned, men may be, it is only by their feelings towards irreconcilable

opponents in opinions that their practical love of justice can be proved. This test, judging even from British history, many eminent modern writers seem unable to stand. The greatest genius, the most learned education, the kindest heart, the most charitable of natures, have often failed before it. Throughout political and religious histories alike, as proved by the statute books of the most civilised European lands, students will perceive the efforts of some of the best and wisest men devoted to enforce or legalise acts of the most extraordinary injustice about matters of opinion alone.¹ It would seem that the most learned as well as pious men, unless reminded of their duties to opponents as well as partisans, through intercourse with both, are often inclined to think and write with probably unconscious injustice about the former. The principle of party spirit, which "tends to

¹ See Sir G. C. Lewis's "Influence of Authority."

pardon anything in those who belong to the party, and nothing in those who do not,"¹ still rises to its very height in parliamentary elections.²

In these scenes of civilised contest violent language, though frequent and often unjustifiable, seldom does permanent harm, and rarely causes lasting bitterness of thought. So much allowance, perhaps indeed too much, is made for the excitement of opposing candidates and their supporters that complete reliance is seldom placed in all their expressions, which in Britain, though not in Ireland, are usually soon forgotten. But in works of history, philosophy and theology—those permanent depositaries and exponents of human conviction, thought

¹ Archbishop Whately.

² "All reason, all experience, and the authority of all the wise, are often powerless when opposed to excited party spirit."—Whately's annotation to Bacon's essay on "Superstition."

and reflection—every word is often examined with care by attentive, credulous and trustful readers. In such works injustice, intolerance and partial views, if not detected, produce lasting results in embittering and prejudicing the most candid and truth-seeking persons against each other. Such works have proved that some of the greatest writers are inclined both to praise and glorify men or opinions agreeing with their own views, and to take very slight interest either in persons or opinions differing from them. Thus the historians and theologian, Macaulay, Carlyle and Newman, though influenced or controlled by the just, calm, tolerant legislation of their country, yet evince an ardent exclusive preference for certain men and certain opinions which in a less peaceful period might have produced practical results very different from the probable desires of these eminent men.

Newman shows little consideration for or interest in opponents of Christianity.¹ He mentions Roman paganism as "the fit subject of persecution," and eloquently records the sufferings of believers in Christianity, while saying little about those endured by the votaries of other religions.

He also states that religious error is in itself immoral, and while holding this opinion it is unlikely that he could be quite free from religious intolerance.

¹ "That religious error is in itself of an immoral nature : that before all things it is necessary to hold the Catholic faith ; that he that would be saved must thus think, *and not otherwise*—this is the dogmatical principle which has strength." "That truth and falsehood in religion are but matter of opinion ; that we are not more acceptable to God by believing this than by believing that ; that no one is answerable for his opinions ; that *they are a matter of necessity or accident* ; that we may take up and lay down opinions at pleasure—this is the principle of philosophies and heresies, which is very weakness."—"Development of Christian Doctrine." Ch. vi. sec. 2. Yet history proves that the religious belief of a vast human majority was unavoidably a matter of accident or of necessity.

Macaulay's essays and history arouse scarcely any admiration or pity for the opponents of Cromwell or William III. He even allows historical knowledge to yield to fancy when inventing a political conversation between Milton and the loyalist poet Cowley.¹ In this remarkable discussion the enlightened liberal historian of the nineteenth century makes the bitter republican poet of the fifteenth utter the sentiments of the former. If the latter's prose works, however, are examined, it is evident that the real Milton would have viewed Macaulay's Milton with bitter and perhaps abusive contempt. Mr Carlyle apparently admires rather than blames the intolerance of John Knox.²

¹ "Miscellaneous Works."

² "What is tolerance? We do not tolerate Falsehoods; we say to them, 'Thou art false, thou art not tolerable! We are here to extinguish Falsehoods, and put an end to them in some wise way.' I will not quarrel so much with the

In fact, conscientious non-Christians, Jacobites and Scottish Roman Catholics, may alike find some reason of complaint against these great writers: for if their feelings towards opponents had inspired British legislation, its enactments would scarcely present that calm, dispassionate fairness which is now the admiration of the civilised world. This beneficial result has evidently been greatly if not mainly caused by the vast increase of

way: the doing of the thing is our great concern. In this sense Knox was full surely intolerant."—"Heroes and Hero Worship." Lec. iv. Torquemada, the Duke of Alva, and Catherine de Medicis practically shared these sentiments, and made it their "great concern" to "put an end" to what they believed "Falsehoods" in the most "wise way" they thought possible. See Sir G. C. Lewis on the success of religious persecution throughout the Continent.—"Influence of Authority." Ch. ix. On this subject Mr Mill writes with more historical and practical fairness than Mr Carlyle: "Men are not more zealous for truth than they often are for error, and a sufficient application of legal or even of social penalties will generally succeed in stopping the propagation of either."—*Essay on "Liberty."* Ch. ii.

international intercourse during this century, and by the unprecedented extension of general knowledge, freely furnished by the information of traders and travellers as well as by historians or political writers. When men are thus brought into continual and peaceful contact or acquaintance, their differing opinions are found united with opposite qualities in various individuals, and people then judge each other by personal experience. They no longer depend, as in former times, upon the descriptions, versions and ideas, furnished by a few able thinkers about their fellow men.¹ Neither religious prejudice nor political jealousy can, then, interfere to pervert the

¹ "We see men of all kinds of professed creeds attain to almost all degrees of worth or worthlessness under each or any of them." — Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship." Lec. i. This admission would scarcely have been shared by Mr Carlyle's "Heroes," Mohammed, Dante, Knox or Luther, nor does it seem quite consistent with his own enthusiastic admiration for them.

calm judgment which free and peaceful intercourse enables men of all countries and all religious opinions to deliberately form of each other.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE present aspect of the religious world is a remarkable contrast to former times. That Christianity is now the chief religion, in political power as well as in the education, wealth and influence, of its votaries, must be acknowledged by those of all other religions. It prevails over all Europe, where Moham-
medan rule in a few provinces is only permitted by Christian powers for political reasons. It extends, likewise, throughout all the vast continent of America. In Asia its political rule and influence, extended by Russia over its northern parts, and by Britain over its southern, are steadily increas-

ing, and but for their political rivalry would probably attain complete pre-eminence, if not absolute power. Yet of this rivalry neither Mohammedans or Buddhists take any aggressive advantage. They seem alike paralysed in military strength between these great Christian powers, who, triumphant in every contest, are alone obstructed, or rather delayed, in their progress by each other.

In the islands comprising Australasia the rule of Christian colonists is scarcely now opposed by heathen nations, who, mentally inferior even to the aborigines of America, seem destined to disappear completely through time. Africa, within recent years, has attracted more interest than ever in Europe owing to the travels and writings of English, French and German explorers. The present premier lately declared "that long-neglected continent" was becoming more interesting chiefly because Europe had become

less so.¹ It has certainly hitherto resisted European civilisation more obstinately than almost any other part of the world, but all of it, except some parts of the interior, is evidently yielding more and more to Christian power, by which the faith is sure to be gradually followed or extended. While, geographically speaking, Christianity, chiefly spread by European colonists, seems extending everywhere, its progress among Jews, Parsees, Buddhists and Mohammedans, is by no means what its ardent votaries had probably anticipated. It is not found that educational enlightenment and free intercourse with Christians produce the complete or national religious conversions formerly expected by eager theologians. Even Parsees living under British rule, and thoroughly attached and loyal to it, yet preserve their extraordinary

¹ Lord Salisbury's speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet August 6, 1890.

faith, which many might have thought would disappear soon after their contact with friendly, educated and ruling Christians. Yet their ancient worship continues from generation to generation among the few descendants of those who survived Mohammedan persecution. Their adoration of the sun, their prayers to the four elements, and their Towers of Silence, where they place their dead, to be devoured by birds of prey—all these practices continue under British rule, with the Christian Bible constantly, but as a rule vainly, offered to them. Mohammedans and Buddhists likewise oppose Christianity with the firmness of hereditary conviction. The comparatively calm passiveness of the latter may, perhaps, prove more amenable to Christian influence,¹ but to ardent Mohammedans the attractive image of the victorious Prophet still super-

¹ See Lyall's "Asiatic Studies."

sedes the expiring figure on the Roman Cross, enjoining respect, indeed, to be paid to the latter, but persisting that he himself brought God's last revelation to men. But though the common opposition of these three religions to Christianity well merits attention, that of the comparatively civilised Jews, living in the midst of Christian enlightenment, is infinitely more remarkable. The fond idea of Christian enthusiasts that their faith was sure to gain credence among enlightened, virtuous people, directly it had a fair chance of being rightly taught or explained, has been, in their instance especially, quite dispelled. It is proved that educational enlightenment, in men of virtuous lives and conduct, can oppose Christianity as well as believe it. The mental revolt of some learned and excellent deists, free-thinkers and atheists, born and educated as Christians proves this fact, as well as the persistence of the Jews in their

hereditary deism. The opposition, indeed, of Jews, deists, free-thinkers and atheists, inhabiting Christian lands seems far more surprising than that of Mohammedans, Buddhists and Parsees, dwelling in distant countries. Yet despite these singular, and in the former cases unexpected hindrances to Christianity, the latter is far stronger, and makes far more progress among mankind generally, than any other religion. But it is evident that its success does not give it that complete intellectual triumph which its votaries desire, when in the midst of what they call Christian light, power and influence, some of its best men desert it, while the votaries of many other religions reject it despite every inducement to conversion. Newman, writing in '46, fears lest Christianity, if not all religion, should yield to the complete freedom and daring advocacy of atheism.¹ But his apprehensions

¹ "Infidelity itself is—I am obliged to say—in a more

were not realised. Though since he wrote there has been very little religious persecution in Europe, though utter atheism, and every kind of religious scepticism, are allowed free expression, in most civilised countries, yet Christianity is not replaced or apparently much weakened by any hostile argument, talent or influence. Indeed atheism, though occasionally avowed or indicated by a few thoughtful as well as frivolous minds, has hitherto avowedly replaced no religion in any country.¹ The re-

hopeful position as regards Christianity. The assailants of dogmatic truth have got the start of its adherents of whatever creed; philosophy is completing what criticism has begun, and apprehensions are not unreasonably excited lest we should have a new world to conquer before we have weapons for the warfare. Already infidelity has its views and ideas, on which it arranges the facts of ecclesiastical history."—"Development of Christian Doctrine." (Introduction.)

¹ "To us at home a wider view of the religious life of the world may teach many a useful lesson. . . . The position which believers and unbelievers occupy with regard to their various forms of faith is very much the same all over the

sult of a calm survey of the present religious state of the world indicates that no confidence can be felt by the ablest theologians that any religion, no matter how well explained, will be accepted by his fellow men. The most learned sceptics are subjected also to the same disappointment about the extension of their own views. Their doubts on religious belief have, as a rule, failed even in lands where they obtained a brief ascendancy. No country in the world proclaims itself atheistic. The paramount influence of some kind of religion is avowed by every human society calling itself a nation.¹

world. The difficulties which trouble us have troubled the hearts and minds of men as far back as we can trace the beginnings of religious life. . . . In order to understand fully the position of Christianity in the history of the world, and its true place among the religions of mankind, we must compare it not with Judaism only, but with the religious aspirations of the whole world."—Max Müller's Introduction to "Science of Religion."

¹ "Religion may be morally useful without being intellectually sustainable, and there are still both nations and

In this respect France, inhabited by a brave, intellectual and most observant people, geographically situated in the midst of European knowledge, intercourse and enlightenment, seems destined to instruct the surrounding world.¹ Atheism, bold, triumphant, almost despotic in pronouncing legal penalties against every kind of religious worship, ruled France towards the end of the last century. Such a spectacle was never presented to the world before, or anything resembling it, from the earliest records of history. This atheistic despotism followed soon after the philosophic

individuals with regard to whom this is actually the case."—
Mill's "Essay on Religion," p. 73.

¹ "It is in France that the fortunes of Christianity during the last three centuries have been most visibly represented in the brightest and in the darkest colours. The Gallican Church, in the seventeenth century the most brilliant in Europe in its works of active mercy and in its age of great divines, became in the eighteenth the victim of the great convulsion which, while it shook the belief of the whole of Europe, in France, for eleven years, suppressed it altogether."—Stanley's "Eastern Church." (Introduction.)

and attractive writings of Voltaire. It professed to admire or follow his teachings, spirit or advice, but his humanity and love of justice had vanished with himself from the minds of the most influential among his fellow countrymen.¹ Their brief reign was soon replaced by the restoration of Roman Catholicism, which prevailed till 1870, when again, in Paris at least, atheism triumphed after the confused exasperation following the defeat of Napoleon III. by the Germans. Again it was suppressed and Roman Catholicism restored by the undoubted will of the French nation generally. In all revolts and changes in other lands, before, during and since these events, no country in either the old or new

¹ "Voltaire lived to see a band of trenchant and energetic disciples develop principles which he had planted into a system of dogmatic atheism. The time came when he was spoken of contemptuously as retrograde and superstitious."—Morley's "Voltaire." Ch. ii.

world has avowedly abolished or rejected religious belief. Although there prevails in most European and American countries complete freedom of thought, speech and literature, in matters of religion, yet the result, from a general point of view, seems to alike disappoint or falsify the expectations, wishes and apprehensions, of both the devout and the sceptical. There is apparently a decline of zeal, enthusiasm or energy, among the religious, and also among the irreligious, compared to what former times displayed. Thus we find Judaism firm and flourishing as ever, rejecting Christianity in the midst of Christian lands, and with thorough knowledge of its doctrine. Christianity is, in different forms, attacked, distrusted and repudiated, by some highly educated men born and educated in that faith; yet in no country has it been extinguished by any of them. Even

its Roman Catholic version, which of all others has been most exposed to atheistic attack, survives if not as politically strong yet as doctrinally influential as ever since the Reformation — or acknowledged to be so.¹ The Papacy continues to preconise cardinals and appoint prelates throughout the greater part of the civilised world, yet no longer much supported by the aid of military or the influence of political power. The Protestants of various denominations preserve their doctrinal differences without either much weakening or being weakened by other religions. Amid them all deism and atheism appear — sometimes among the most learned, sometimes among the most ignorant. Yet there

¹ "The doctrine is where it was, and usage, and precedence, and principle, and policy : there may be changes, but they are consolidations or adaptations. All is unequivocal and determinate with an identity which there is no disputing."—Newman's "Development of Christianity." Ch. viii.

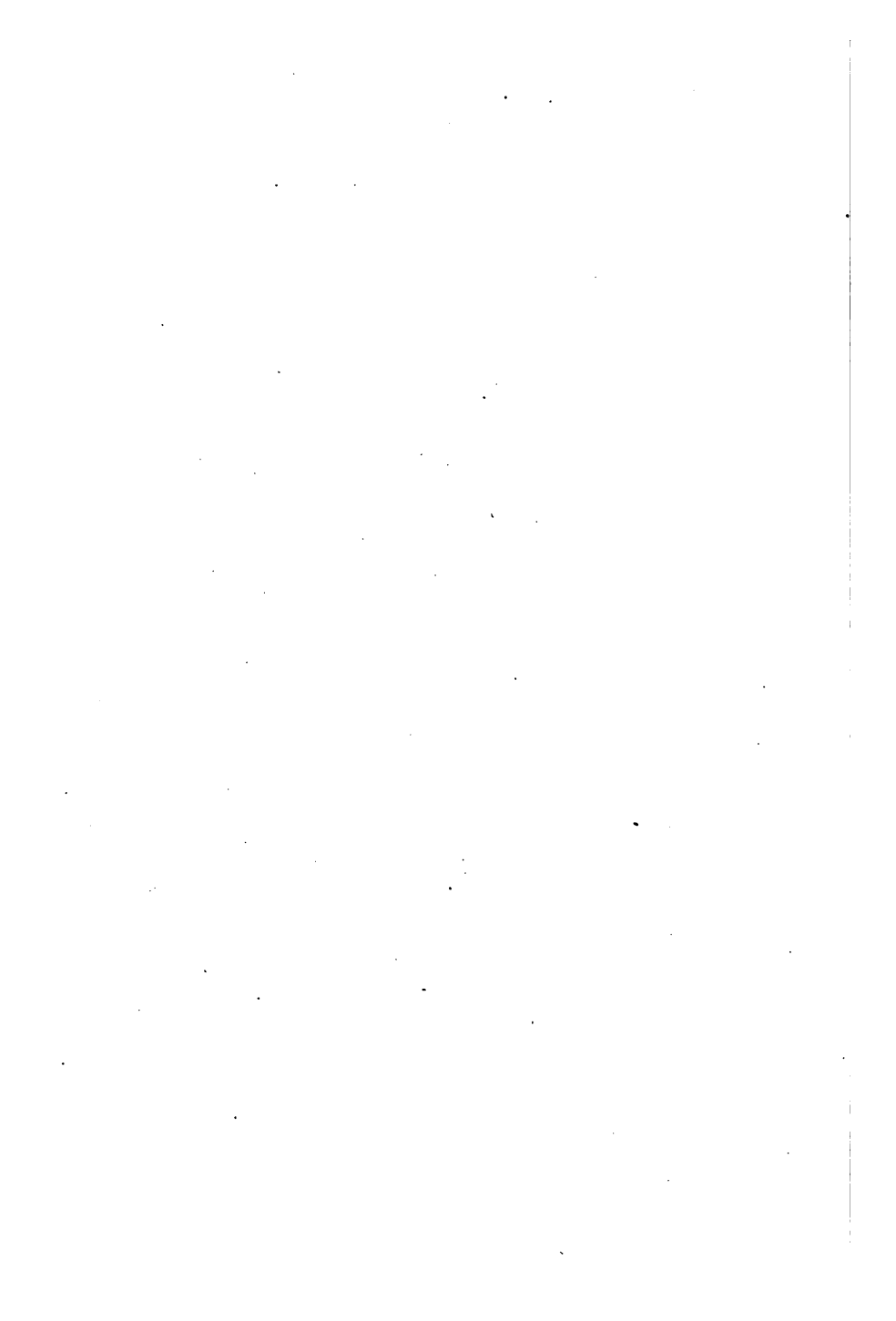
is a comparative absence of religious or anti-religious enthusiasm among all alike. The latter part of this century seems a time of unprecedented religious calm, amid a commercial, scientific, industrial and educational, activity never equalled in the history of mankind. The comparative freedom it allows to mental thought, reasoning and publicity, vastly increases human knowledge in every part of the world; but it decides nothing about religious truth, as proved by the conflicting ideas of the most enlightened men who have adorned it.¹ It

¹ "However much is discovered, the object of our scrutiny must still be beyond us because of the character of the first and only records of Jesus. . . . The world's chief nations have now all come, we see, to reckon and profess themselves born in the religion of Zion, the city of righteousness. But there remains the question what righteousness really is. The method, and secret and sweet reasonableness of Jesus. But the world does not see this, for it puts as righteousness something else first and this second. So that here, too, as to seeing what righteousness really is, the world now is just in the same position in which the Jews when Christ came were."—Arnold's "Literature and Dogma," pp. 160 and 371.

is a subject which apparently will continue to impress mankind with different opinions, views and conjectures, even as to the Creator's existence while the world lasts. This present century seems, however, despite the perplexity of some theologians, to be, though very gradually, inducing men's minds to take a clearer, nobler view of their Creator than was ever before publicly or practically acknowledged. The proof of this clearer recognition of a higher nature is displayed in the improvement generally perceptible in men's conduct towards each other. This improvement, despite occasional interruptions, seems steadily continuing in public policy and general legislation. Men, it may be confidently believed, are now more careful and solicitous than ever about each other's rights, comforts, advantages and general welfare. It is surely by such external and visible signs as these that the value of any

religious belief men may hold is really shown. These proofs the present state of most civilised countries seems to more fully display than at any previous period. Thus the love of peace, charity and goodwill, among mankind, which the practical evidence of improved legislation displays more and more throughout the civilised world, surely bears a close and, it may be said, obedient resemblance to the spirit of the Christian Founder.¹

¹ "The authentic sayings of Jesus of Nazareth are surely in sufficient harmony with the intellect and feelings of every good man and woman to be in no danger of being let go after having been once acknowledged as the creed of the best and foremost portion of our species. There will be, as there have been, shortcomings enough for a long time to come in acting on them, but that they should be forgotten or cease to be operative on the human conscience while human beings remain cultivated or civilised may be pronounced once for all impossible."—J. S. Mill's "Essay on Religion," p. 98.



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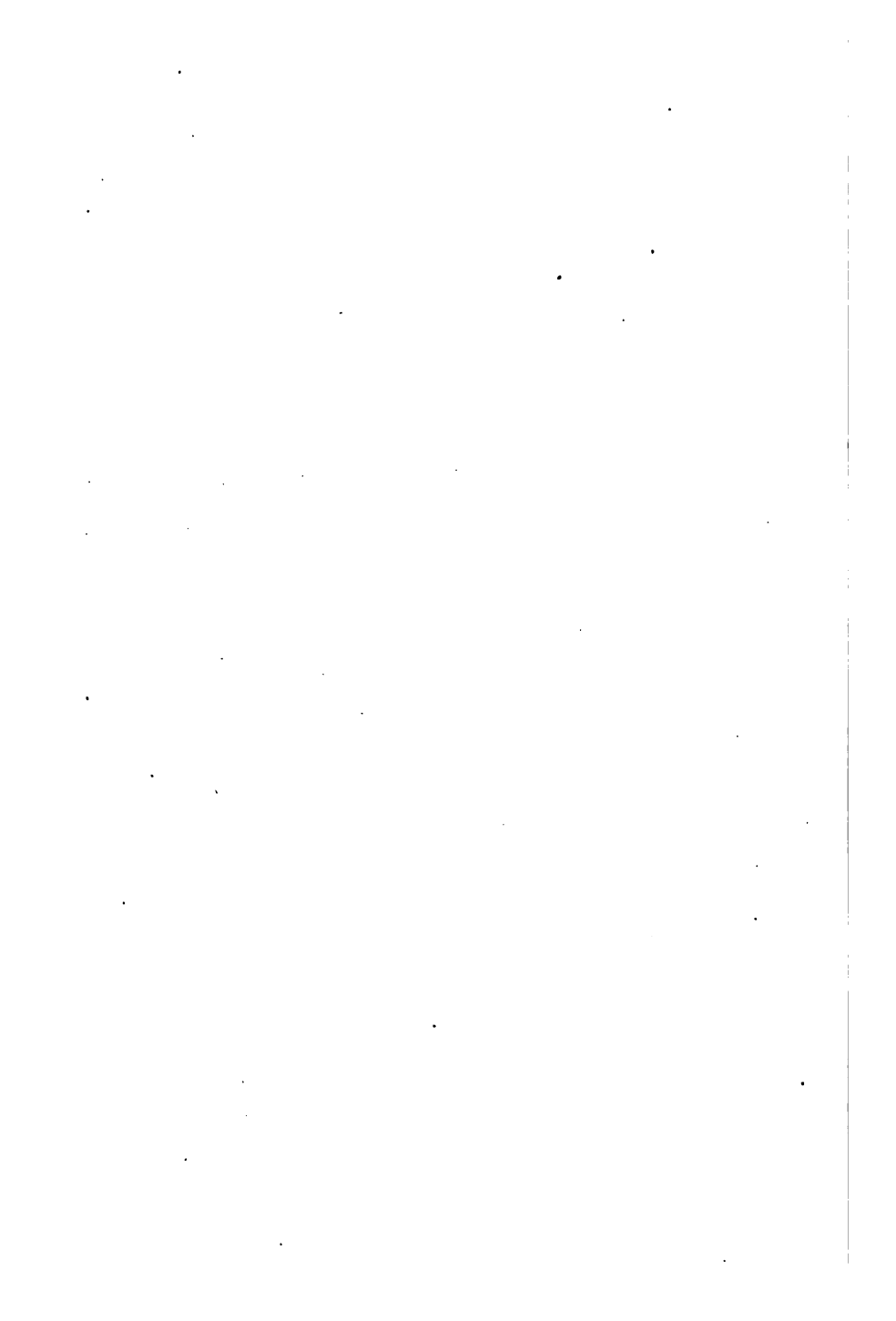
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